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# THE VEDANTA KESARI



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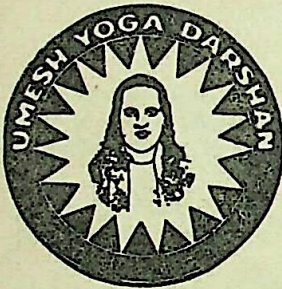
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JULY, 1966

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## NOTICE

This is to inform all our subscribers that we are compelled to enhance the subscription of the *Vedanta Kesari*, due to the increase in the cost of paper, maintenance, etc., to Rs. 6/- per year for all new enrolments, and renewals from July onwards. The revised rates will therefore be :

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.... Be bold and face  
The Truth ! Be one with it ! Let visions cease.  
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,  
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

# THE VEDANTA KESARI

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## PARAMĀRTHASĀRA

इत्याधारो भगवान् पृष्ठः शिष्येण तं स होवाच । विदुषामप्यतिगहनं वक्तव्यमिदं

शृणु तथापि त्वम् ॥ ८ ॥

8. Thus questioned by the disciple the teacher Ādiśeṣa answers him : This (what you have asked) and what I am going to tell you though incomprehensible even to the most learned I shall teach you. Listen.

सत्यमिव जगदसत्यं मूलप्रकृतेरिदं कृतं येन । तं प्रणिपत्योपेन्द्रं वक्ष्ये परमार्थसारमिदम् ॥ ९ ॥

9. Bowing down to Upendra, who, by His primal Prakṛti, has projected this unreal (universe), making it appear as real, I shall relate to you about Reality.

अव्यक्तादण्डममृदण्डाद् ब्रह्मा ततः प्रजासर्गः । मायामयी प्रवृत्तिः संह्रियत इयं पुनः

क्रमशः ॥ १० ॥

10. From the Unmanifest<sup>1</sup> arose the Cosmic Egg ; from the Cosmic Egg Brahmā ;<sup>2</sup> from Brahmā all the creation<sup>3</sup> came into being. This activity is of the nature of Māyā ; the creation is again reabsorbed into the Ātman in the reverse order.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From the Unmanifest, ' which has been perceived by the Puruṣa ' is to be substituted, says the commentary. For the Unmanifest by itself has not become the Cosmic Egg but by the presence of Īśvara.

<sup>2</sup> From the Cosmic Egg into which the Puruṣa had entered Brahmā arose.

<sup>3</sup> Creation both movable and immovable.



<sup>4</sup> The commentary gives a different meaning to this part of the verse :  
‘The creation has been briefly explained by the great ones in the passage :  
“Nārāyaṇa is superior to Unmanifest ; the Cosmic Egg has come out of the  
Unmanifest ; in the Cosmic Egg are all the worlds and this world having the  
seven continents ”.’

नारायणः परोऽव्यक्तादण्डमव्यक्तसम्भवम् । अण्डास्यान्तस्त्वमे लोकाः सप्तद्वीपा च मेदिनी ।

Now follows the description of the nature of Puruṣa who has entered  
the products of Māyā as Antaryamin and Jīva.

मायामयोऽप्यचेता गुणकरणगणः करोति कर्माणि । तदधिष्ठाता देही स चेतनोऽपि न  
करोति किञ्चिदपि ॥ ११ ॥

11. This aggregate of the *guṇas* and *karaṇas* (organs) (i.e. the body) is the product of Māyā and though inert does actions (good, bad and of a mixed nature), whereas the one who rules it (the embodied being) though conscious does not do anything.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The nature of the Self being sole intelligence any activity which involves a change in its nature is impossible.

How the non-conscious aggregate of body and senses by the mere proximity of the conscious Ātman acts is explained in the next verse.

यद्वदचेतनमपि सन्निकटस्थे आमके भ्रमति लोहम् । तद्वत् करणसमूहश्चेष्टति  
चिदधिष्ठिते देहे ॥ १२ ॥

12. Just as iron though itself inert moves in the proximity of the lodestone, similarly the aggregate of the *guṇa* and *karaṇa* acts in the body controlled by intelligence.

OBJECTION : Let there be no direct agency of the Ātman in the acts, but is it not possible that it may be the inducer of actions ?

The following verse gives the reply to this question.

यद्वत् सवितर्युदिते करोति कर्माणि जीवलोकोऽयम् । न च तानि करोति रविर्न  
कारयति तद्वदात्मापि ॥ १३ ॥

13. As the whole creation gets active at the rising of the sun but as the sun neither does nor induces others to do any action likewise the Ātman too (neither does nor causes to do any action).

कर्मेन्द्रियाणि खलु पञ्च तथापराणि बुद्धीन्द्रियाणि मनःसद्विचतुष्टयं च ।

प्राणादिपञ्चकमथो वियदादिकं च कामश्च कर्म च तमः पुनरष्टमी पूः ।

The *puryaṣṭakas*, the eight factors, are the cause of involvement of the Ātman in *samsāra*. They are (1) the five organs of actions, (2) the five organs of knowledge, (3) mind, intelligence, mindstuff and ego, (4) the five *prāṇas*

(Continued on page 143)



## HOW FREE IS OUR WILL ?

THERE is an idea current for some decades now that man's will is unfettered, that it is free. A straight negation of this statement is not possible, nor can it be blindly accepted as wholly true. Why can we not assert one way or the other? Why should we hesitate to accept or reject this statement in toto? Let us examine these questions. What is meant by will? According to the Oxford Dictionary it means: 'the faculty by which a person decides or conceives himself as deciding upon and initiating action'. Again, it gives us the meaning of 'free will' as the 'power of determining one's choice of action independently of causation'. The Indian philosophers call this 'deciding faculty' as *buddhi* in Sanskrit.<sup>1</sup> According to them it is a part, so to say, of the inner organ (*antah-karana*); *manas* (mind), *citta* (mindstuff), and *ahaṅkāra* (the ego) go to form the other parts of it.

The first objection that will be raised against the theory of free will, if the above definitions are accepted, is how can an instrument be free. If it were so the writer's pen, the artist's brush, the carpenter's chisel, the blacksmith's hammer and such other instruments would have done work by themselves. To this we may be answered that, it is not the instrument by itself that is meant here but the instrument or faculty which is energized by consciousness. In that case it is not the will that is free but the person, who to many is at most the ego, the 'I'. Then the question arises: Is the ego free? What is the ego? These are questions that must be answered in order to come to a clear conception of what we have to say about the will. The ego according to the Advaitin is a false identification—due to nescience or ignorance—of the Ātman or soul with the idea of 'I'. How can that which is by itself under

the spell of ignorance be free? Perhaps the person wishing to favour this idea of free will may not like to go into this intricate method of reasoning. The idea appeals to him. So he accepts. But it is one thing to accept a theory and quite a different thing to put it into practice in the day to day life. A man of free will as defined above must not be deterred by circumstances. All his resolutions must come true and be fruitful or he should not be worried or disturbed over the results. Even when the results are unfavourable he must be able to take them on calmly. Does a man, who subscribes to the theory of free will, happen to possess this tranquillity? That is the question. That is what ultimately counts; for the ultimate aim of man, to which end are all his struggles and efforts throughout his life, is to attain tranquillity, peace and blessedness. Ask yourself: Why do I want freedom? Because in it alone there is peace, and joy. In bondage, in dependence a great many things compel you to act and behave against your wishes in spite of yourself; you are inhibited by circumstances, and goaded by inherited tendencies and obtaining situations.

How then can one be free? We need not go far to test this freedom. Try to break a bad habit or cultivate a new good one and you will find the difference. We make good resolutions in the morning but by evening, carried off in the current of habits, they are all washed away, and this happens day after day, month after month, year after year and yet we are not able to put the resolutions into effect. Is that the indication of a free will? So, it goes without saying that the will, with whatever it is identified, is not so free as we think.

Yet, this idea has been placed in man's mind as an incentive to work. If this incentive was not there, if everything has been automatic then there would have been no

<sup>1</sup> निश्चयात्मिका बुद्धि :



evolution of man; perhaps he would have been as primitive today in his habits, customs and manners and morality and religion as the man of paleolithic age, living in caves and moved by passions like animals. Man is man because he can struggle against nature outside and inside of himself; he has that much of freedom. Sri Ramakrishna speaking of the free will says: 'It is God alone who has planted in man's mind what the Englishman calls "free will". People who have not realized God would become engaged in more and more sinful actions if God had not planted in them the notion of free will. Sin would have increased if God had not made the sinner feel that he alone was responsible for his sin'. We would have found that the laws of the land would have no meaning if everyone was not made responsible for his actions. There would have been no rule of sanity; it would have been a pandemonium, a chaos. That is what happens to people who take the sense of the theory of Karma in a perverted manner. Overcome with *tamas*, inertness, they have no urge to work, and attribute everything to Karma. But ask them as to what they know about the theory, which is much maligned by the foolish or un-understanding, and you will come to know that either they do not know about it or stop with saying that it is the result of the actions in past lives. They do not pause to consider as to who did the actions in the past whose results they are reaping now. Everyone reaps the results of his own actions, and not that of another. Justice may be miscarried in a court of law where the judge has to go by the evidence that is put before him; but before God who is the witness of all our actions, all evidence is self-revealed and there can be no injustice. Only the weak and the ignorant do not want to pursue this line of thinking. For then they will naturally be confronted with the question: if the past actions have produced the present results why not change the pattern of our actions to mould our future lives? These thoughts are perhaps, too much for the idle, because they are logical and convincing arguments and would natu-

rally lower them in their own eyes if after coming to this conclusion they were to remain indolent.

## II

Whence has this idea of freedom arisen? We know there are some notions which are fundamental to man, e.g., eternal life, unalloyed bliss, and unlimited freedom. The Advaitin says that they are the nature of the essence of man, of the *Ātman*. Therefore it is not possible for him to forget his nature, however much he is smothered by nescience, however much impeded he is by his limiting adjuncts. Just as a man who has seen a fearful dream even after waking up continues to be in a scared state for some time more, similarly man's inner nature though covered by heavy encrustations persists to assert itself in some way. The notion of free will is one such.

The question which now faces us is: Why does that which is free need not be called free? Let us not confuse one thing with another. It is a fact that the *Ātman* is free but not in the state of identifying itself with the body. The *Ātman* has no action to do, nothing to be attained; what has the one which is eternal, pure, enlightened and free, by its very nature to attain? <sup>2</sup> Nothing. Whereas action is for a purpose, to satisfy a want, to fulfil a desire. Of course we have to make exceptions for the actions of the Incarnations and their apostles. They come to redeem humanity, to show them the path; they have no purpose of their own to attain. Sri Krishna says in the *Gītā*: 'I have no duty to perform in the three worlds, nor have I anything to attain which has not been attained, yet I engage Myself in action'. <sup>3</sup> Others are moved to act by some motive, either high or low. The higher motives such as realization of God, attaining *bhakti* are good and

<sup>2</sup> नित्यः शुद्धो बुद्धमुक्तस्वभावः

— *Maitre. Up.*, 1. 16.

<sup>3</sup> न मे पार्थाऽस्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किंचन ।

नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ।

— *Gita*, 3. 22.



do not bind man down, do not make him go round the cycle of birth and death. He becomes more and more free as this motive gets strengthened. The lower motives which are mostly selfish and are concerned in the satisfaction of the desires of the body and mind do not liberate us. On the other hand, they drive one more nail into the coffin of our bondage. Thus we see that to involve in action shows a state of imperfection. How then can there be perfection in an imperfect state? It is not possible, and that is where we stumble — by trying to see perfection in the imperfect; rather, seeing the imperfect as the perfect. And when we once know that what we consider as our self is not the Self but the non-self it is not correct to call it free. But this discriminative knowledge comes later, on realization of God or Ātman; till then this error will remain. Only we have to know, at the beginning, that the will is not entirely free though the appearance of freedom is there. Sri Ramakrishna has explained this idea in his marvellous way. He gives the example of a cow tethered to a peg by a rope. The cow can move freely within the area described by the circle with the rope as the radius and not more. If the owner is pleased he may lengthen the rope and allow more space for the cow to move about and graze. The cow may think itself free but when it wants to go beyond the length of the rope it will feel the pull of the rope round its neck. Man's will is also like that. He has been given freedom within certain limits beyond which he cannot go. A hero like Arjuna asks Sri Krishna, 'By what is man prompted to do wicked deeds, though unwilling, compelled as it were by force?'<sup>4</sup> 'This desire, this anger, born of *Rajas* is a great depredator, and a great sinner; know that to be your enemy here',<sup>5</sup> replies Sri Krishna. So where is the free will, when it

is easily motivated and moved by desires and swayed by passions? We come to know of our limitations only when storms of failures toss our boat of life on the sea of *samsāra*. A young man, full of health, wealth and power does not realize this. He thinks he is supreme. Even grown-up people who have not had to face any great calamity will not understand it. But there comes a time when everyone has to face life as it is and not as a rosy dream. The thorns in the rose will prick and open man's eyes to reality. Only one will is free and that is the will of the Most High. One who submits to His will glides smoothly through all storms and stress.

### III

How to be one with the will of the Creator? There is a story of a *Yogi* who was standing on the shores of the sea. A gale arose and he saw a ship caught in the gale and being mercilessly driven and thrown about on the sea. The *Yogi* had attained some powers. He could control even the natural elements. Out of compassion, as it were, he exclaimed 'Let the storm cease', and his words were fulfilled. But as the wind suddenly died away, the ship capsized drowning all who were on board. This shows that human will is not all-perceiving, it cannot look beyond appearances and then falters and misjudges things. Therefore it is all the more necessary that we should try to attune our will to the will of God. There is a beautiful parable of Sri Ramakrishna which illustrates this attitude. There was once a weaver who was a devotee of God and who did all the work that was expected of him in his station of life, but never forgot God. Even in his transactions he saw the will of Rama, his chosen Deity. He was honest and therefore when people came to deal with him he would say: 'By the will of Rama the value of thread is so much, by the will of Rama cost of labour is so much and by the will of Rama the profit is so much and price so much'. People of the whole village liked him and trusted him. One night, however, when he could not sleep and was sitting in the worship hall and remember-

<sup>4</sup> अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः ।

अनिच्छन्नपि वाष्ण्यं बलादिव नियोजितः ।

— *Ibid.*, 3. 36.

<sup>5</sup> काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुण समुद्भवः ।

महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ।

— *Ibid.*, 3. 37.



ing the Lord some thieves who had nefarious intentions forced him to accompany them. They burgled a house and put the booty on the weaver's head to carry and marched him on. Just then the police arrived and the robbers fled. The weaver was caught with the robbed jewels and was put in the lock-up. Next day he was produced before the magistrate. People of the village who had gathered in the court were astonished to find the weaver in the dock. They said to the magistrate that the weaver could never have stolen the jewels. The magistrate then asked the weaver to state his case.

The weaver said : ' Your Honour, by the will of Rama I finished my meal at night. Then by the will of Rama I was sitting in the worship hall. It was quite late at night by the will of Rama. By the will of Rama I had been thinking of God and chanting His name and glories, when by the will of Rama a band of robbers passed that way. By the will of Rama they dragged me with them ; by the will of Rama they committed a robbery in a house ; and by the will of Rama they put a load on my head. Just then, by the will of Rama the police arrived and by the will of Rama I was arrested. Then by the will of Rama the police kept me in the lock-up for the night, and this morning by the will of Rama I have been brought before your Honour.' The magistrate realized that the weaver was a pious man and ordered his release. On his way home the weaver said to his friends, ' By the will of Rama I have been released '.

But this type of surrender to the will of the Lord is obtained by long and sincere practice, and by living a pure and unselfish life. To borrow an expression of Sri Ramakrishna there should not be any theft in the chamber of one's heart of such a person. The mind and speech should be one. Such a one is called a great soul, a *mahatma*. A Sanskrit verse describes him as : ' Same in

thought, word and deed '.<sup>6</sup> If we attempt to follow this principle we shall gradually get rid of our ego and be able to surrender ourselves to the will of God.

What is the use of such surrender ? Does it not look like slavery ? We glibly use the word slavery when it concerns the upholding of our ego but when it concerns our material prosperity we are ready to undergo any humiliation. And what do we gain by such demeaning ? Unrest and thirst, desire for more, whereas surrender to God's will brings us peace. Nothing perturbs a person who has surrendered to the will of God. He bows down to the will of the Lord with calmness not because it is inevitable but out of joy, knowing that in it alone lies the blessedness of his life. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, ' You are not worried when you rely on a good man '. And who can be more good than God ? As long as we think ourselves as separate entities possessing separate wills of our own, we shall be thinking of our duties to perform, desires to be attended to, ambitions to be achieved, and the idea to trust another, however good, will not arise in our minds. And as long as these ideas remain we will be severally impelled to seek our selfish interests which naturally will come into conflict mutually. So wills with worldly ambitions cannot be free as they would limit one another. Unless all the thought-currents flow in one direction, towards God, there could not be oneness of our will with that of the divine and as said earlier without achieving identity of our will with that of God's there will always be turmoil and strife making the will more and more subject to constriction. Let us try to cultivate reliance on God, without in the least slackening our efforts towards realization. For all spiritual teachers have pointed out that grace of God is the most potent and essential factor in the progress and attainment of the goal of life, liberation.

<sup>6</sup> मनस्येकं वचस्येकं कर्मण्येकं महात्मनाम् ।



## PARAMĀRTHASĀRA—(Continued from page 138)

(vital forces), (5) the five elements such as ether etc., (6) desire, (7) deeds and (8) nescience, *tamas*. These being of the nature of *Māyā* are unreal but are beginningless and continuous like a stream. That is why man gets away from knowledge, or Reality. This is the purport of the above three verses.

मनसोऽहङ्कारविमूर्छितस्य चैतन्यबोधितस्येह । पुरुषाभिमानसुखदुःखभावना भवति मूढस्य ॥ १४ ॥

14. Of these, the products of *Māyā*, for the mind which has been subject to egoity, illumined by consciousness, there comes—to a foolish person—the idea that he is ‘a person’, ‘an enjoyer’ or ‘a sufferer’.

कर्ता भोक्ता द्रष्टासि कर्मणामुत्तमादीनाम् । इति तत् स्वभावविमलोऽभिमन्यते

सर्वगोऽप्यात्मा ॥ १५ ॥

15. Due to this (false identification) the intrinsically pure *Ātman* though pervasive thinks itself as the agent, the experiencer of good deeds and as the cogniser.

In fact for the pervasive Consciousness there cannot be any distinctive perception of anything nor has it the gradual perception or perception by sequence. Everything is perceived by it at all times and in all places.

Attributing agency of action and the experiencing of the results thereof for the ever pure is a contradiction in terms. Yet because of the identification with the eight distracting factors cited above, they are all superimposed on the *Ātman*.

नानाविधवर्णानां वर्णं धत्ते यथामलः स्फटिकः । तद्वदुपाधैर्गुणभावितस्य भावं विभुर्धत्ते ॥ १६ ॥

16. Just as the pure crystal takes on the different colours of the various objects (with which it is in proximity) so also the All-Pervasive One (*Ātman*) takes on the characteristics of the adjuncts produced by the *guṇas*.

The limiting adjuncts such as the bodies of Divine beings, human beings and the like.

गच्छति गच्छति सलिले दिनकरबिम्बं स्थिते स्थितिं याति । अन्तःकरणे गच्छति

गच्छत्यात्मापि तद्वदिह ॥ १७ ॥

17. Here, in this world, just as the orb of the sun appears to be moving in the flowing water and to be unmoving in the still one, so also the *Ātman* appears to be moving when the *antahkaraṇa* (the inner organ) moves and attains quiescence when the latter becomes still.



# SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA

SWAMI TAPASYANANDA

THE life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna stand forth in a striking manner for some of the essential values for which Indian culture has been striving through the ages. He has made a profound impression on humanity in spite of the fact that he eschewed the political and social struggles of mankind as also the learned pursuits of science and philosophy — in fact all the usual avenues through which men ordinarily make an impact on life and carve out for themselves a niche in the mansions of history.

His life centres round the one theme : that God exists and that the meaning of life with all its struggles and strivings is to achieve an understanding of Him. In fact all holy men have stood for this ideal, but his distinction lies in the uncompromising emphasis he laid on it, in the whole-hearted and undivided manner in which he pursued it and the most convincing demonstration he gives through life, of the possibilities of man in this direction.

Whether God exists or not is an open question for even the wisest among us, and all philosophy is nothing more than the proverbial 'much may be said on both sides', as far as this question is concerned. Yet the question is vital to us, as the side we take in this basic riddle is what will determine the direction and quality of our life. Hence the importance of any assuring message on this question, and of the messenger who stands as a link between man and his spiritual possibilities.

The outward life of Ramakrishna is uneventful and is on a pattern with that of any other saintly personage, but his inner life is rich in content and challenging in its significance. In his life as a spiritual aspirant, he exemplifies how the quest after God can pass the limits of conventional or academic proprieties and become an organic craving that absorbs the total energy of man. The inten-

sity of that craving, he compared to the demand that a drowning man feels for air to the exclusion of everything else in life. It was Ramakrishna's experience that when this aspiration attains to a cent per cent genuineness, there is positive response from something in the cosmic environment which enfolds the devotee in its blissful luminosity, fills him with bliss, light and a sense of certitude and immortality, and transforms the body-bound fugitive human consciousness — the victim of Nature's forces — into the detached witness whom Nature delights by Her cosmic sport.

This story of his inner transformation, Ramakrishna narrates in his own inimitable way clothed in a familiar illustration drawn from domestic life : 'Mother sets her child to play,' says he, 'with toys and some candies, and goes to work in the kitchen. Unmindful of the mother the child plays on the livelong day, engrossed with the toys and candies, and the mother too keeps away from him busy with her work. At last the child begins to get bored and calls for the mother, but the mother heeds it not. But when he throws away the toys, and stricken with hunger, cries in desperation for the mother, wanting her and her alone, she makes her appearance and takes him up in her arms'. Similar, declares Ramakrishna, is the law of spiritual life, and his experience stands as a witness to its truth.

Subsequent to his spiritual enlightenment, much of Ramakrishna's life was spent in what is called the state of Samādhi. There is no topic of spiritual life on which there is more misunderstanding than on Samādhi. Mere loss of external consciousness or mere subjective visions are no indication of Samādhi. The true seer experiences the Divine in waking, dream and sleep, but the experience is mediated by the physical vehicle with which consciousness is identified in these states. In



Samādhi this identification is released and the body becomes unconscious. Consciousness gets attuned to the subtler vibrations of the Cosmic Mind and becomes open to segments of Reality imperceptible to physical consciousness. In the highest form of Samādhi, the Nirvikalpa, consciousness is released from egoity and, therefore, from every form of modification, and it recognises its identity with its Infinite and Absolute Substratum. According to Ramakrishna an ordinary aspirant who attains to this state, never gets back the physical consciousness. But there are rare persons — the great world teachers and incarnations — who regain the individualized consciousness by the Divine Will. They retain in their minds a modicum of altruistic desire to bring the saving knowledge to one and all, and so they regain the ego — not the narrow, body-bound ego of pre-illumination days, but what Ramakrishna calls the 'Ego of Knowledge', the transformed, divinized self-consciousness which feels its kinship with the Divine always and which experiences the Divine presence in everything. They live on what Ramakrishna calls the Bhāva-Mukha, the threshold of the Becoming or relative consciousness — the state of being centered in the Cosmic Ego which links their consciousness with the Absolute on the one hand, and its relative manifestations in all spheres, gross and subtle, on the other. They thus become channels for divine revelation to the *jīvas*.

Ramakrishna's Samādhi and spiritual experiences are to be understood in the light of this explanation. They are grounded on Reality. They are not to be equated with seizures of epileptics or the phantasies of schizophrenics, as he pertinently retorted to a critical intellectual: 'You think day and night of all sorts of material things, and yet consider yourselves as possessing sound brains, while I who always meditate on that Eternal Fountainhead of Consciousness appear to you as deranged! Fine reasoning indeed!'

The truth value of Ramakrishna's spiritual experience can be measured from its effect on him and the impact he could make on life. It converted an illiterate rustic into a sage

whose words of wisdom enlighten and inspire their hearers and readers. It endowed a humble temple priest with a power of personality before which the biggest of his contemporaries felt themselves as mere children. It filled him with a strength of conviction before which the most powerful intellectuals quailed. 'Have you seen God?' came the challenging question of Vivekananda, the critical enquirer and unhesitatingly Ramakrishna replied: 'I have seen Him. I perceive Him always in a sense more real than in which I see you, and I can help you have this perception if you will follow my directions'. It was a perfect answer for a difficult question and it satisfied the seeking of the intellectual high-brow and brought him to the path of discipleship.

Above all, his spiritual experiences transformed him into a centre of light and joy which made their subtle penetrating impact on all who contacted him, and which remained undiminished even in the midst of the greatest trials of life. It is well-known that Ramakrishna died of cancer. The question is often asked why so good and holy a person should suffer from such a fell disease. The 'why' of human destiny is beyond our comprehension, but in the case of Ramakrishna, a world teacher, his physical sufferings help to demonstrate the truth value of his spiritual attainment. Physical sufferings make an ordinary man intensely body conscious, shatters his ideologies, and makes him a centre of depression and sorrow. In Ramakrishna, however, this period of intense suffering was also the most fruitful period of his spiritual life. The body suffered, but suffering failed to agitate the mind or shake his convictions or dislodge him from the joy of spiritual exaltation. His spiritual powers were in fact at their highest then, and he effected transformations in numerous people who resorted to him during this phase of his life. His attending physician Dr. Sarkar, a rationalist and a sceptic, became a convert; his challenging disciple Vivekananda attained Nirvikalpa Samādhi by an act of his will; and innumerable devotees who were struggling in the spiritual path got established in states of peace and joy by the



realizations he bestowed on them by his blessing. Above all, by his example and association during this period he was able to instill his ideas and outlook so thoroughly into a band of highly intelligent and educated young men of status that they thought it worthwhile to give up their homes, prospects, possessions and kith and kin to devote themselves for life to voluntary poverty to follow the footsteps of their Master, in quest of God, and they became the Brotherhood from which the Ramakrishna Movement originated afterwards.

He is therefore a revelation of the Divine to modern Humanity.

The significance of his message and experience has been put in very simple yet apt words by Mahatma Gandhi in his Foreword to Ramakrishna's biography: 'The story of Ramakrishna's life is a story of religion in practice. His life enables us to see God face to face. No one can read the story of his life without being convinced that God alone is real and that all else is an illusion. Ramakrishna was a living embodiment of godliness. . . . In this age of scepticism Ramakrishna presents an example of a bright and living faith which gives solace to thousands of men and women who would otherwise have remained without spiritual light'.

## CAN ONE BE SCIENTIFIC AND YET SPIRITUAL?

(Continued from the previous issue)

SWAMI BUDHANANDA

### III

No doubt science, while bringing great benefits to mankind, has also been instrumental in producing guns, bombs, and missiles. 'Awful' cannot begin to describe the destructive power science has placed in the hands of man. It staggers the imagination. But we have to remember two facts in this regard: (a) first, it is man who has forced out of science this destructive power; science has no personal interest in being destructive; and (b) second, science has come into its own by sheer one-pointed pursuance of truth in its own fashion. The source of the power of science is not in *what* it has achieved — though things achieved are stupendous — but in *how* it has achieved it.

This 'how' is a wonderful saga of self-sacrifice, dedication, concentrated absorption in the search for truth, and renunciation of the vulgar aspirations of life. This entitles the true scientist, the undistracted seeker after knowledge, the respect due to a sage. Disapproving the Indian tendency to respect a religious teacher more than a scientist, and

explaining why he does so, Swami Vivekananda says:

The meaning of the word 'Veda' from which the word 'Vedanta' comes, is knowledge. All knowledge is Veda, infinite as God is infinite. Nobody ever creates knowledge. Did you ever see knowledge created? It is only discovered — what was covered is uncovered. It is always here because it is God Himself. Past, present and future knowledge, all exist in all of us. We discover it, that is all. All this knowledge is God Himself. The Vedas are a great Sanskrit book. In our country we go down on our knees before the man who reads the Vedas, and do not care for the man who is studying physics. This is superstition; it is not Vedanta at all. It is utter materialism. With God every knowledge is sacred. Knowledge is God.<sup>21</sup>

It is reasonable to say that the authority of science, contrary to the common misconception, is a moral authority. Power of science is the power of fidelity to truth and nothing else.

We have no way of knowing that God is more comfortable in a church where incense

<sup>21</sup> Swami Vivekananda: *Complete Works*, Vol. VIII, 1951, p. 137.



is burnt, hymns are sung and loud sermons preached, than in a laboratory where quiet experiments are made in the midnight hours. God may very well like more the type of worship the scientist does in his own way, maybe without his even knowing it to be so!

'And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'<sup>22</sup> By devotion to truth alone, science has become emancipated and attained its moral authority. And power came to it by the way.

But the moral authority of the scientist stands on shaky grounds as long as he knows much about the world but little about the self. Much knowledge of what is outside and much ignorance of what is within, qualifying each other, makes of the scientist a problem unto himself and also the world.

Moreover, a very unfortunate thing has already started happening to the scientists of the world. It is the lesson of history that whenever rightly earned authority, in any field, becomes wrongly authoritarian and loses its humility of spirit, it becomes corrupt. The authority of science seems to be already in the process of becoming contaminated by authoritarianism. The evil symptoms are obvious.

Scientists in numbers are today worshipping not truth, but their governments—who want them to serve as the instruments of their policies, however questionable or dubious they may be—for money and power. They are devising instruments of annihilation with a calculated calmness that is unknown to common murderers. This is detachment with a vengeance.

Before such objective mass misadventure of the scientists, crimes against Brunos pale into insignificance, most inhuman crimes though they were. In Hiroshima, the atom bomb killed some 60,000 men, women and children, and wounded 100,000 more. And almost the whole of the great seaport was totally destroyed by blast or by fire. Scientists who worked for the development of that bomb and have

since been engaged in developing thousands of times more powerful bombs, are by no stretch of the imagination seekers of truth.

Functionally speaking, we find that the true scientific spirit, one of the noblest attainments of the human mind, has today largely got mixed up with the mad pursuit of naked power and senseless commercialization which, by its very nature, is bound to be self-destructive.

This is one of the most poignant tragedies of modern times, which creates a universal problem for us all to face. No one can escape the implications of this problem. Hence, it is necessary to understand the nature of the problem as clearly as we can.

As we have already said, the *zeitgeist* today is dominated by the scientific spirit. And this scientific spirit today has become almost inseparable from some of the worst motivations of men. Nothing is more frightening than power wedded to lunacy. And what is more pathetic than sanity which has no way of being effective?

Every thinker on the affairs of the world has indeed a job on hand to devise means as to the way science can be dissociated from madness and kept associated with sanity and pursuit of truth. This will largely depend on the awakening of conscience among the scientists. What in fact is needed is a world-wide *satyagraha*—non-co-operation with obvious evil while pursuing, according to the tested and authentic method of science, the knowledge of the world of nature—for saving the integrity of science, and for keeping it wedded to welfare purposes as distinguished from destructive purposes.

A good number of scientists are so enslaved today to politicians and industrialists that, only through a long, heroic, self-sacrificing struggle, will they be able to regain their freedom to follow their vocation in the true manner of the scientist who is conscious of his high responsibility to science and society.

It is not easy to foresee when this may happen. It would, however, appear that some

<sup>22</sup> *New Testament* : St. John VIII. 32.



scientists in the world—among whom one can find human beings of the finest character—are slowly but surely awakening to the urgency of saving the integrity of science at any cost.<sup>23</sup>

In any case, even if science did not show signs of becoming authoritarian or losing integrity, in any age, the dominance of the scientific in the time-spirit would not be for the good of mankind.

This statement requires explanation. And the explanation is to be found in Albert Einstein's book, *Out of My Later years*.<sup>24</sup> In this book this great man of our times makes some illuminating remarks about science and religion, which deserve to be widely known.

He says that the scientific method can teach us nothing beyond how facts are related to, and conditioned by, each other. Of course, as is understandable, he claims that such objective knowledge is the highest man is capable of. And with a twinkle in his eyes he remarks,

'and you will not expect me to belittle the achievements and heroic efforts of men in this regard.'

<sup>23</sup> The American Association for the Advancement of Science's Committee on Science in the Promotion of Human Welfare, in an important document titled 'Integrity of Science', released on December 31, 1964, has given convincing evidence that scientists—if not all scientists, at least a considerable section of them—care for maintaining the integrity of science as any thinking humanist in the world, if not more. We shall quote a few lines from the document's section on 'The Responsibilities of the Scientists and of Society':

'Under the pressure of insistent social demands, there have been serious erosions in the integrity of science. This situation is dangerous both to science and society. If society is to enter safely into the new age of science, steps must be taken to strengthen the competence of science as a reliable guide to nature at its source—the integrity of science. Scientists have an inescapable responsibility to maintain the integrity of science; this is required by their duties to their own disciplines and toward society.'

Then this impressive document proceeds to indicate how the maintenance of integrity has to be worked for, in a manner which will hardly admit of any improvement.

<sup>24</sup> Albert Einstein: *Out of My Later Years*, Philosophical Library, New York, 1950.

Continuing, he says,

'Yet it is equally clear that the knowledge of what *is* does not open the door directly to what *should be*.'<sup>25</sup>

The Einsteinian analysis follows this way: it is perfectly possible that we may have the clearest idea in regard to 'what is' in a given phenomenon, yet not be able to deduce from that what should be the goal of human aspirations. Objective knowledge, no doubt, provides us with powerful instruments for the achievement of certain ends. But can such objective knowledge by itself give us intimations of the end and inspiration for moving toward it?

Einstein unequivocally says: no. And he asserts that it must come from another source. What is the source? According to Einstein, that source is religion. And he emphasizes the fact that our existence and activities acquire meaning only by setting up such a goal and corresponding values.

Therefore, he believed, as is obvious in the pages of this book, that there should be a creative dialogue, understanding and mutuality between science and religion. He clinches his views on the matter in this epigram:

'Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.'<sup>26</sup>

It is possible that some may not fully agree with this epigram. They would rather say: Science without religion is blind and religion without science is lame, emphasizing the fact that religion gives us vision, science gives us power. This point apart, Einstein was clearly of the view that between science and religion there should be strong reciprocal relationships and dependencies.

Science of course cannot enunciate the goals and create in us a motivation for reaching them. But in regard to means for reaching the goals which can be enunciated and

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.



motivated only by religion, religion can directly or indirectly learn much from science.

This point is clearly put by Bertrand Russell when he says :

‘... science can tell him how certain ends might be reached. What it cannot tell him is that he should pursue one end rather than the other.’<sup>27</sup>

Science can make a bulldozer. But it cannot train the emotions of the driver so that he will stop it before a crawling baby and not run over it.

Religion, on the other hand, cannot make a bulldozer but it can train the emotions of the driver so that he will not roll it over the baby.

To be sure, we require bulldozers. We also want to be sure that bulldozers will not go about crushing babies. We require power and sanity to go hand in hand. And in the power of science — which is a blind power — sanity is not inherent ; therefore, it has to come from somewhere else. That “somewhere else” is nowhere else but in religion.

Arguments are not wanting, from among those who apotheosize what they call ‘pure science’, to the effect that the amoral, functional efficiency typified by the bulldozer is the principal aim of the scientist. Fortunately, however, such arguments come only from a minority of the scientists.

But Einstein, who is universally respected as one of the greatest scientists of all time, is definitely of the view that science, as he understands it, can be created only by those people who are imbued with the aspiration toward truth and understanding. And this source of feeling, so necessary for the proper development of scientific spirit, springs from the sphere of religion. In his own words,

‘To this also belongs the faith in the possibility that the regulations valid for the world of existence are rational, that is, comprehensible to reason. I

cannot conceive of a genuine scientist without that profound faith.’<sup>28</sup>

Thus we see, on the authority of a great scientist, that faith is the working basis for even true scientific investigation. Again it is well known that faith is the foundation of a spiritual life. In other words, in a man the two types of inquiry after truth have to depend on one single factor, which is faith. This being so, why should it be impossible for a single person to be at once spiritual and scientific?

That this is not mere theory is also proved by Einstein’s own life — so much science, and so much goodness (which is the soul of spirituality) together, harmoniously and so beautifully integrated.

#### IV

Now, at this stage of our deliberation arise two pertinent questions which were articulated by Swami Vivekananda in this manner :

‘Is religion to justify itself by discoveries of reason, through which every other concrete science justifies itself? Are the same methods of investigation which we apply to science and knowledge outside to be applied to the science of Religion?’

And, continuing, he himself gave this answer to these questions :

‘In my opinion, this must be so, and I am also of the opinion that the sooner it is done the better. If a religion is destroyed by such investigations, it was then all the time useless, unworthy superstition ; and the sooner it goes the better. I am thoroughly convinced that its destruction would be the best thing that could happen. All that is dross will be taken off, no doubt, but the essential parts of religion will emerge triumphant out of this investigation. Not only will it be made scientific, as scientific, at least, as any of the conclusions of physics or chemistry, but will have greater strength, because physics or chemistry has no internal mandate to vouch for its truth, which religion has.’<sup>29</sup>

So here we have, on the authority of a great spiritual teacher, the clear enunciation

<sup>27</sup> Bertrand Russell : *Wisdom of the West*, Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, New York, 1959, p. 312.

<sup>28</sup> Albert Einstein : *Out of My Later Years*, p. 26.

<sup>29</sup> Swami Vivekananda : *Complete Works*, Vol. I, 1962, p. 367.



of the fact that by being subjected to scientific scrutiny and discipline, true religious spirit can only gain. This voice of religion vocalized by Vivekananda is singularly refreshing for two reasons : first, here religion shows true veneration for science, which, though not unknown in oriental traditions, has been rarely shown in the Western man's history ; second, here religion challengingly comes out and bares its breast to any hostile arrow, confident as it is of its own indestructibility.

When we juxtapose these two well-considered views, one coming from a great scientific leader, another from a great religious leader, we cannot have any reasonable doubt in our minds that one can be scientific and yet spiritual with enriching results for both the aspects of one's being.

To be convinced even theoretically of this possibility is itself a great help. For much work lies ahead of modern man, as far as solving problems of human existence is concerned. This conviction can be the resourceful basis of a new creative power wherewith he can attack the problems of today and tomorrow in a manner not hitherto possible for him, as he has been living in a house of knowledge divided against itself.

Great and many are the problems that are confronting us, but many also are the resources for solving them. The invaluable findings and realizations of man in the realm of the spirit are in our possession. So are the astounding discoveries of science. Unfortunately, however, these two mighty forces have thus far looked on one another with many misgivings and have often clashed to the detriment of man's best interest.

But today a time has definitely come, an urgency has certainly arisen when they should have a friendly and respectful encounter, in order to learn from each other, in order to profit from each other's association and to be strengthened by each other's powers. Otherwise, we shall not be able to solve the complicated problems of contemporary or future existence, either with the unaided wisdom of religion or the uninspired skill of science.

It is not an issue of scholasticism that we are discussing, the acceptance or rejection of which does not matter except in theory. What we are discussing is an issue of 'to be or not to be' for man. Man will have to find the way to do this successfully or he will not survive. Of this one can be reasonably sure.

Something, therefore, will have to be done first in the very time-spirit of today, which is dominated by the powerful overtones of the scientific spirit. These overtones, which create more problems than they solve, will have to be replaced by the conviction that it is possible to be scientific and yet spiritual. And if we understand all our problems at their roots, there is no greater urgency today than this.

It will, however, be a costly mistake to think that this encounter will have to be brought about by sacrificing some grounds of both as a compromise settlement. If that is done, science will be less than itself and so will be religion. And we cannot have much to do with science and religion that are not themselves. We want both science and religion to be full-blooded and vigorous in their own ways, and yet develop ways for helpful encounter.

How can we do it ?

## V

This can be done only by preparing ourselves to understand as clearly as possible what it takes to be truly scientific and what it takes to be truly spiritual, and then by finding ways of being both in oneself, not theoretically, but in practice.

It should be a perfectly realizable ideal for the simple reason that in the human mind, which is the instrument for being both scientific and spiritual, there are no idea-tight compartments. Moreover, those who have known have told us that in the spirit there are no curtains or walls.

Now, what does it take to be scientific ?

Science, generally speaking, is 'a description of the facts, with the maximum of



completeness and maximum economy of thought'.<sup>30</sup>

To be scientific we must accept the aim of science *as our own*, use its methodology, and also develop a scientific mood or temper. To be scientific requires rigorous discipline of the mind.

'The aim of science is to describe impersonal facts of experience in verifiable terms as exactly as possible, as simply as possible, and as completely as possible.'<sup>31</sup>

All its conclusions must be open to experiment and verification, besides being rational, and not subject to man's will or emotion.

Science aims at precisely describing things as they are, or seem to exist. In its scope science does not include transcendental concepts and offers no ultimate explanations. It deals with secondary causes and not ultimate causes.

'It always seeks to reduce things to a common denominator and reduce the number of categories or necessary concepts.'<sup>31</sup>

It has been well said that 'laws of nature' are descriptive formulae in 'conceptual shorthand' of the routine of our perception.

Science does not pretend to know anything about God or ultimate reality. It cannot say that God does not exist, without being unscientific. And it need not say that God exists to be scientific.

'The scientific mood is specially marked by a passion for facts, by cautiousness of statement, by clearness of vision and by a sense of inter-relatedness of things.'<sup>31</sup>

'There is only one way of knowing how nature works the way of careful observation and experiment.'<sup>31</sup>

'Then you can begin to formulate hypotheses and theories, and from these again deductions can be made. Once more observation and experiment must be brought to bear on these deductions—

so that in the end we get reliable theories which account for all the observed data. This sequence is called the scientific method.'<sup>31</sup>

'The fundamental postulate of science is the uniformity of nature.'<sup>31</sup>

The important criteria of the scientific method are : dynamism and growth ; reproducibility and reasonableness. Objectivity is the passion of science.

What is needed to be scientific is fidelity to facts and readiness to go with open eyes where facts lead, and ability to keep an open mind. Scientists must be absolutely unemotional in rejecting cherished theories when they have been proved wrong, and accepting a new one when it has been proved right.

In fact in this regard, generally speaking, the scientist is a more detached person than the religious man. If you tell the scientist that his theory is wrong, he will only ask you to prove your statement. If you tell the religious man that his idea is wrong, you may be taking a physical risk ! Of course, it is not easy to prove how a religious idea is wrong when we take into account the various levels of understanding of the people.

Now, what does it take to be spiritual ?

In an absolute sense, spirituality denotes the illumined state of existence which one can have only after seeing God or realizing one's identity with the supreme spirit.

In a relative sense, to live a life of that kind of discipline which ultimately leads to the realization of God or experience of Ātman, and thus brings about the liberation of the spirit, is also being spiritual.

In this way of living one has to find one's way to recognize a divine principle — whatever name one may give to it — which interprets, interpenetrates and undergirds the phenomenal world of which man is a part. When

<sup>30</sup> Description given by Kirchhoff and Mach of the task of physics (or of science generally), quoted by Erwin Schrodinger in his *My Views of the World*, Cambridge University Press, 32 East 75th Street, New York 22, N.Y., 1964, p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> All quotations numbered 31 are from J. A. Thomson's *Introduction to Science*, Henry Holt & Company, New York ; Williams and Norgate, London, 1911. For part of our deliberations on 'What it takes to be scientific' we are indebted to J. A. Thomson's book.



one continues to think, act and grow with a progressive sense of relationship with that principle, one becomes more and more spiritual.

It has been said that the business of science is to deal with 'facts'. But what is a 'fact'? That which exists or occurs may be defined as a fact. But how do we know what exists? Through our senses of perception directed by our mind we know what exists. Can there be no such case in which our senses of perception fail to apprehend something that exists? There can be such a case. For the blind man the tree in front of him does not exist. We may say that, irrespective of his not knowing it, the tree exists. Even then it remains a fact, that normally speaking we do not deal with facts as such even in science, but with only our awareness of what seems to exist. In man's dealings with facts, awareness is inseparable. Now this inseparable awareness is itself the great fact of life. Religion, in its finest reaches, deals with this fact. At one pole of existence is the awareness of fact, at another is the fact of awareness. The former is the subject matter of science; and the latter, of religion.

When the awareness of fact is polarized to the fact of awareness in a knowing person, if he is a scientist—like Sir Arthur Eddington—he begins to talk a language with strange accents, like the following:

'The theory of relativity has passed in review the whole subject matter of physics. It has unified the great laws, which by the precision of their formulation and the exactness of their application have won the proud place in human knowledge which physical science holds today. And yet, in regard to the nature of things, this knowledge is only an empty shell—a form of symbols. It is knowledge of structural form, and not knowledge of content. All through the physical world runs that unknown content, which must surely be the stuff of our consciousness. Here is a hint of aspects deep within the world of physics, and yet unattainable by the method of physics. And, moreover, we have found that where science has progressed the furthest, the mind has but regained from nature that which the mind has put into nature.'

'We have found strange foot-prints on the shores of the unknown. We have devised profound theories, one after another, to account for its origin. At last, we have succeeded in reconstructing the creature that made the foot-print: and lo! it is our own!'<sup>32</sup>

If to be scientific is to deal with 'facts', to be spiritual is also to be factual in another sense. Spirituality does not mean theorizing, but experiencing, seeing. Seeing what? Seeing what exists. And when one spiritually experiences a fact, unlike a scientific experience, it is no doubt a personal experience, but it is not a private fact. Such a fact is predictable and verifiable in the personal experience of others.

Patanjali in his *Aphorisms on Yoga*, and Narada in his *Aphorisms on Devotion*, clearly and precisely enunciate what kinds of disciplines, by what stages, will lead to what experiences. In the *Vedānta-sāra*, a text-book on non-dualistic Vedānta, four-fold disciplines are prescribed for the realization of Ātman. Buddha codified his disciplines as the Noble Eightfold Path, and clearly indicated by what stages one who practises these disciplines will attain *nirvana*. Under the given condition of the same practices, the same experiences will be had.<sup>33</sup>

If this approach to teaching religion is largely adopted, religion will stand on as sure grounds as science. Swami Vivekananda says:

Experience is the only source of knowledge. In the world, religion is the only science where there is no surety, because it is not taught as a science of experience. This should not be. There is always, however, a small group of men who teach religion from experience. They are called mystics, and these mystics in every religion speak the same tongue and teach the same truth. This is the real science of religion. As mathematics in every part of the world does not differ, so the mystics do not differ. They are all similarly constituted and simi-

<sup>32</sup> Vide: Sir Arthur Eddington: *Space, Time and Gravitation*, The Cambridge University Press, Bentley House, London, N.W. 1, 1953, pp. 200-1.

<sup>33</sup> The mass of evidence available in Indian literature to prove this point is enormous. But a perusal of the treatises mentioned in this paragraph will be enough to carry conviction.



larly situated. Their experience is the same; and this becomes law . . .

Religion deals with the truths of the metaphysical world just as chemistry and the other natural sciences deal with the truths of the physical world. The book one must read to learn chemistry is the book of nature. The book from which to learn religion is your own mind and heart. The sage is often ignorant of physical science, because he reads the wrong book—the book within; and the scientist is too often ignorant of religion, because he too reads the wrong book—the book without.<sup>34</sup>

There is some significant difference between the two sets of disciplines, scientific and spiritual. To be scientific, it is enough if one sharpens one's intellect and observes the disciplines of the scientific method. Theoretically speaking, it is possible to be immoral and scientific simultaneously.

But it is impossible to be immoral and spiritual simultaneously. The scientist has to inform his mind in order to carry on his work, whereas the spiritual man has to transform his whole being. This is a great difference. This difference is due to the fact that basically science addresses itself to things within time-space-causality, and religion to things beyond time-space-causality. To know things beyond time-space-causality, we must transcend the barrier of time-space-causality. How do we do it? Here arises the question of moral perfection, by which is meant complete mastery over the senses and the mind. In scientific investigation this transcendence is not called for, though undoubtedly under the same given conditions of other necessary qualifications a scientist with greater self-control will in all probability be a greater scientist, too.

A man who has attained moral perfection develops a new power of understanding, which enables him to know and see things beyond the realm of time-space-causality. The methods of attaining the super-sensuous knowledge beyond time-space-causality are clearly detailed in the scriptures on yoga. It is possible

for a master-scientist to attain also moral perfection and to penetrate into the mysteries beyond time-space-causality. After attaining super-sensuous knowledge, when the scientist-sage applies his mind to the understanding of the world of time-space-causality he may very well find that the world of phenomena cannot be truly understood without the help of transcendental knowledge—in the manner one cannot truly understand the true value of the house in which one lives if one has never gone out of it.

Science is descriptive and offers no ultimate explanation; religion is mystical and interpenetrative, implying a realization of a higher order of things than the realm of sense experience.

The spheres of science and religion being different, there is no necessity for them to clash. How is it, then, that we hear so much about the conflict between science and religion?

All conflicts between science and religion arise from avoidable causes,<sup>35</sup> such as: (a) the clash of a particular expression of religious belief with facts of science; (b) the clash of a particular scientific philosophy with religious feeling; (c) attempts to combine in one statement scientific and religious formulations; or (d) the application of psychological inquiry to phases of religious experience.

An analysis of all conflicts between science and religions will show that they originate in misunderstanding, and in a false antithesis between two incommensurables.

The only way of avoiding conflict between religion and science is to be *truly* spiritual and *truly* scientific.

Theoretically speaking, and also practically, it is perfectly possible for one to be truly scientific and spiritual simultaneously. In fact, for a fuller understanding of the world of being, man needs to bring about as pervasive an encounter as possible between these two ways of knowing in his personal life.

<sup>34</sup> Swami Vivekananda: *Complete Works*, Vol. VI, 1963, p. 81.

<sup>35</sup> Vide: J. A. Thomson: *Introduction to Science*, pp. 222-3.



A truly scientific mind cannot close itself to any order of facts. The entire mass of evidence available in various spheres of knowing should claim his attention. The vast data of spiritual experiences are a standing challenge to the scientific mind, for without a proper study of these data, no total concept of reality can be formed.

Again, the truly spiritual enquirer cannot close his mind to any form of truth coming from any quarter, especially when it comes from a tested source, like that of science, for 'thou shalt know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free'.

Therefore, a forceful encounter of full-blooded science and full-blooded religion in one life will mean that, while science will inform, religion will transform. Through the study of the sciences, the intellect will be quickened, and through the practise of spiritual disciplines the mind will be purified.

To the truly spiritual person with whom God is not a mere hypothetical assumption but the supreme fact of existence and experience, science, by what it proves or disproves, at any point of time, can only uphold the greater glory of God. To him science is not a deadly weapon in the hand of the formidable enemy, as some pseudo-religious appear to suppose, but a very interesting and intricate kind of ritual in the hand of the fellow worshipper. Science is, so to say, *one* kind of response of the limited to the unlimited and religion is another kind of response. With some efforts of habituation it is possible for a single person to develop both the responses.

In India one has hardly ever heard of a scientist who claimed himself to be an atheist. And there have been quite a few celebrated scientists in the world of profound spirituality, not to speak of the unknown many. In the face of this evidence this possibility cannot be questioned.

The main thing to be remembered is that in this world there are things to be seen with keen open eyes, and there are also things to be seen with clear closed eyes. It is through the instrumentality of the senses and the intel-

lect that we gather our scientific knowledge. But contrary is the case with spiritual knowledge. The Upaniṣad says :

'When the five instruments of knowledge stand still, together with the mind, and the intellect does not function, that is the supreme state.'<sup>36</sup>

This is why in the knowledge of science spiritual knowledge is not necessarily inherent. This, however, is not to say that the two types of disciplines are incompatible and antagonistic to each other. One can easily carry on keen experiments in the laboratory and also practise deep meditation, discrimination and self-analysis at home.

If the mind is trained in one direction, this trained mind is also likely to be helpful in another direction. For the fuller understanding of our world and ourselves, we indeed stand challenged to practise these two types of disciplines in every single life.

It is only when we fully realize this fact, and do something in regard to it in our personal life, that we begin to work for bringing about the much needed change in the time-spirit dominated by overtones of science.

## VI

We must realize that achieving this ideal — of bringing about a judicious change in the time-spirit — is not an easy task, not a work of a few days, not a job for a handful of enthusiasts. To this work through whole epochs of history, efforts of millions of people will have to be deliberately devoted, through re-orienting our systems of education in order to give a new sense of direction to thoughts, aspirations and affairs of men.

It is good to remember that we are living today in a shrinking world of vanishing resources, with absolute space open to man. At one pole of existence we shall have to live physically by the power of the smashed atom, and at the other pole we shall have to thrive spiritually by developing an awareness of Ātman. What might have been the fad of a

<sup>36</sup> *Katha Upanishad*, II. 3. 10.



scientist or the madness of a saint, has compellingly turned out to be a necessity for sane survival of the common man. The common man of today is condemned to be great. Otherwise, he will be crucified on the cross of his knowledge and failure.

We must realize that in this work is involved supreme self-interest of every one of us. We cannot leave the work to the other fellow. We may not see the fruit of our work bringing us profitable dividends, yet if we understand clearly the forces working in the world, we must quietly work for this ideal.

To this end, we must first get acquainted with the forces that may be operating in the field. On examining the forces, if we find that they are helpful, we may join hands with them.

Notwithstanding the fact that the time-spirit is dominated by the scientific spirit; notwithstanding the fact that theology has bitterly and obstinately fought science through centuries; notwithstanding the fact that there are scientists who think all spiritual findings of man are no better than half-illegible idiocies,<sup>37</sup> to be swept away by the broom of the scientists' exact knowledge, — there are nevertheless other facts and forces slowly but surely working in the affairs of men.

In the sphere of science, as far as fundamental scientific thinking is concerned, forces of sobriety and sanity have been at work.

The views of Einstein in regard to limitations of science and the need of reciprocity between science and religion are not a lone

idealist's futile cries in the assembly of the deaf. Rather they are indications of what is happening in the world of thought in some of its most dynamic areas.

A historian<sup>38</sup> of the development of scientific thought has pointed out certain facts which may provide grounds for cautious optimism as far as eventual prevalence of wisdom in the camp of science is concerned :

(a) Men of science, most of whom used naively to assume that they were dealing with ultimate reality, are coming to see more clearly the true nature of their work.

(b) They are realizing that they are not dealing with ultimate reality at all.

(c) Fundamental concepts of physical sciences are nothing more than abstractions framed by their own minds, explanations in mathematical terms, about an aspect of reality.

(d) In spite of this enormous deficiency of science in regard to apprehending reality itself, scientific study has provided us with most dependable facts even for metaphysical study of reality.

(e) There are great moments of science when suddenly bits of puzzle fit together, different and isolated concepts are brought into harmony by some master-mind, and mighty visions flash into sight, resulting in the making of great syntheses, such as Newton's Cosmogony, Maxwell's Coordination of Light and Electricity, or Einstein's reduction of gravity to a common property of space-time.

(f) The expectation persists in the world of science that out of these lesser syntheses will surely emerge a higher, grander synthesis. In 1943 the historian of science speculated :

'All the signs point to another such synthesis, in which relativity, quantum theory and wave mechanics may fall into an all-embracing unity of some one fundamental concept.'<sup>39</sup>

This dream has not yet become a reality, and one really does not know when it will.

Naturally, at such moments when such events happen, physical science seems supreme. As science advances from one supreme moment to another, we get clearer insight into

<sup>37</sup> Vide : John Langdon Davies, *Man and His Universe* (The Thinker's Library — No. 61), Watts & Co., 5 & 6 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C. 4, London, 1950, pp. 14-15 :

'... That is why the whole epic of man's spiritual and imaginative experience for thousands of years has been not the filling up of a clean page with truth, but the rubbing out of a page crossed and recrossed with close-written, contradictory, half-illegible idiocies. And we should realize that even at this early stage of our story the will to undertake this labour comes from what we call scientific imagination; that the scientist is the scavenger cleaning the human mind of all its false ideas, from which have hung innumerable sorrows and cruelties since the first ape-man speculated wildly about the universe around him.'

<sup>38</sup> Sir Cecil Dampier : *A History of Science : And Its Relation with Philosophy and Religion*, Cambridge : At the University Press; New York : The Macmillan Company, 1943. See Preface and Introduction.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. xxiii.



its meaning, and also its strength and weakness. Thus it has been possible for modern scientific philosophy to see and acknowledge the facts

‘... that by its inherent nature and fundamental definitions, it is but an abstraction, and that with all its great and ever-growing power, it can never represent the whole of existence. Science may transcend its own natural sphere and usefully criticize some other modes of contemporary thought and some of the dogmas in which theologians have expressed their beliefs. But to see life steadily and see it whole, we need not only science but ethics, art and philosophy, we need the apprehension of a sacred mystery, the sense of communion with a Divine Power, that constitutes the ultimate basis of religion.’<sup>40</sup>

This statement, coming from a trained academician, proves that a new realization is coming to prevail with an ever-growing num-

ber of scientists who now realize that,

‘the whole of existence is too great a thing to yield its secrets when studied in one aspect only.’<sup>41</sup>

Insofar as our search in regard to the possibility of being scientific and yet spiritual is concerned, this augurs well.

To be true to principles of science, it may be re-emphasized, the scientist cannot close his mind to facts or data coming from any quarter in relation to a particular branch of study, or in regard to fundamental facts of existence itself, to which, in the ultimate analysis, everything will be related. Therefore, if from the camp of religion certain data come forth, science has to respectfully examine them, if it is to be true to itself.

(To be continued)

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxiii.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. xvii.

## MEMOIRS OF SWAMI ADBHUTANANDA

(A free translation of the Bengali book, *Smṛitikatha*)

(Continued from the previous issue)

### CHAPTER XX

WE have already related that Lātu Maharaj left Balarambabu's house in Calcutta for good and came to Varanasi. He broke his journey at Deoghar-Vaidyanath and proceeded from there direct to Varanasi. He was accompanied by four persons—householder disciples, Patalbabu and Chattulal, Paśupati, and Prakāśa. All of them came to Advaita Ashrama, Varanasi. After a week Chattulal, Patalbabu and Prakāśa returned to Calcutta; Paśupati stayed at Varanasi to serve Lātu Maharaj; and the two lived in the Advaita Ashrama, leaving it just before Kali Puja. Chandra Baba, who was then the President of the Advaita Ashrama took special care of Lātu Maharaj as long as he stayed there; every day he would read the *Gītā* to Lātu

Maharaj. Chandra Baba got a letter that Swami Sivananda and Swami Turiyananda would be coming to the Advaita Ashrama in November. Hearing this and thinking there would not be room at the Advaita Ashrama for so many people, Lātu Maharaj left the Ashrama a few days before the arrival of the two Swamis and came away and settled down at Sri Kundu's house at Tedineem in Godhuliya. In this house Lātu Maharaj arranged for Lakshmi Puja on the occasion of the Dipavali. Seeing a Sannyasin arranging for Lakshmi Puja a devotee of Varanasi was surprised. When it was known, Lātu Maharaj simply remarked, ‘Mother Lakshmi is the *śakti* of Narayana, and everybody is entitled to worship *śakti*’.



When Lātu Maharaj was living at Tedi-neem Holy Mother came on a pilgrimage to Varanasi. Khokā Maharaj (Swami Subodhananda), Master Mahāśaya ('M'), Ganen Brahmachari were with her. They were all putting up at Kiranbabu's *Lakshmivilasa* house. The house where Lātu Maharaj was staying was not very far from where Mother and her party were putting up; so they used to meet often. One day all were invited to a lunch at Advaita Ashrama. During the meal time Khokā Maharaj and Master Mahāśaya were talking on various matters. In the course of conversation they came to the topic of *samādhi*. Lātu Maharaj said, 'Samadhi, you see, is a thing which has not been polluted by being expressed in words of mouth. Should you talk of it while eating? Master used to say, "During the time of eating you are to take your mind down; or else you will have indigestion".' Then the talk turned to other topics.

Bibhutibabu kept Lātu Maharaj's company at Varanasi for seven years at a stretch. He used to take notes of his conversation with Lātu Maharaj. There, in his notes, he writes at one place: 'One day Lātu Maharaj said, "Go, go, I do not recognize your (Holy) Mother". It was shocking not only to me but to all who were present. For nobody could believe that for her whom he served so devoutly for so many years he would not have any respect. It is a proposition which is simply unbelievable. And later on it was discovered to be so. But Lātu Maharaj wanted to keep his wonderful regard for Holy Mother secret. One day he started with flowers, *bilva* leaves, etc., to worship Viswanatha (the name of the Deity at Varanasi). Reaching the main street, he changed his mind and said, "Let us go to Mother first". What were we to do? All turned to Kiranbabu's house. Lātu Maharaj went direct upstairs and appeared before Mother's room. There he became a changed man; shaking all over his body, he placed all the things he brought for worshipping Viswanatha at Mother's feet and silently started shedding profuse tears. All the while Mother was seen passing her right palm gently over the

head of her dear boy. What a soul-enthraling scene it was! Then having taken leave of Holy Mother, he went to Viswanatha.'

The devotee with whom Lātu Maharaj stayed in Godhuliya had to come away to Calcutta in three weeks. So, Lātu Maharaj was constrained to leave that house and come away to Bansi Datta's house at Sonarpura. Here Lātu Maharaj was to get highest regard from the owners of the house. One day Lātu Maharaj expressed it openly to others: 'The old manager is a perfect gentleman. He shows high honour to monks and holy persons. He would sit down near me as long as I would take my meal, to see personally that I was properly looked after. After my meals were over, then only would he sit down to eat himself. He would not give me the slightest cause for irritation. He would show great respect even for persons who would come to visit me'. The devotee: 'Why did you then leave that house, Maharaj?'

Lātu Maharaj: 'Five persons were to come there; they were all the house-owner's relatives. So unasked, I came away.'

From there Lātu Maharaj came to a hired house at 68, Pande Hauli. There during the Christmas holidays many devotees came from various places outside Varanasi to see Maharaj settled in the new house. The author also went there during this time. One devotee from Madras used to bear the house rent by himself. He gave six month's rent in advance. This was a great relief to Lātu Maharaj. For about four years he stayed in this house. Afterwards there was some difference of opinion regarding the rent, so Lātu Maharaj left that house and came away to the rented house at 96, Hadar Bag.

At Pande Hauli house also Lātu Maharaj was so much absorbed in meditation etc., that he had no fixed time for his meals. The following description is from the pages of the Bengali monthly *Basumati* and from the pen of Biharibabu: 'In his life there was such a current of irregularity and anomaly that one cannot say whether he was living in a city or in a forest. If today he took his meal at 10 p.m. tomorrow it was at 12 midnight



and day after it was at 3 a.m. Taking meals, sitting, standing, sleeping—in nothing there was any fixed time. His attendant was to keep himself ever alert as to the time when he would get up from his meditation and would give orders for preparing meals. Then perhaps at 1 a.m., all on a sudden, he would start abusing, and abusing without reason, and abusing no one in particular or general. But those who had passed some years intimately with him knew it well that all this fuss was directed against none else but his own mind, which would not like to come down from the heights of meditation and was thus causing inconvenience to others around him or serving him'.

When a devotee saw him again engaged in tremendous *sādhana* at Varanasi he asked him one day, 'Maharaj, you have seen the Master, you have served him so long and so well, and you have yourself done so much *sādhana* in Calcutta on the bank of the Ganges for so many years. Why should you again do such *tapasya* in this old age?'

Lātu Maharaj: 'You know, mere seeing him and serving him is not sufficient for the attainment of the Highest. It is not so easy as that. Mere seeing and serving will not do, spiritual practices are necessary; and through His grace then one will get at the Truth. Without practices you cannot receive grace. For a drop of grace you will have to work so hard. For the holding and preserving of grace one is to practise hard, otherwise, grace, though there will not be effective. And do you think that grace is one, or of one sort, that the moment you get it you are full and overflowing, and your labour has come to an end? Infinite are His graces. In how many ways He may show His grace no one knows.'

The devotee: 'It is for this you are labouring so hard even now!'

Lātu Maharaj: 'My boy, how vain is your talk! You talk of our *sādhana*? What *sādhana* have we done? Look at that robber Ratnakara turned saint. He saw that prince of saints, Narada, not only him, but our grand-sire Brahmā himself, whose mere sight gives salvation to people. Even after seeing

them and receiving their ample grace, Ratnakara performed austerities for sixty thousand years. And what kind of austerities? So engrossed was he in the meditation of Rama that he forgot altogether, during this long period, that he had a body. So much so ant-hills formed around it. Just understand what spiritual *sādhana* is. Why did he do that? It is to understand what truly grace meant. Their grace changed the current of Ratnakara's mind. But who else but he himself was to wipe off his mind and brain? So he had to practise such tremendous *sādhana*. These mental impressions, my boy, are as indelible as the deep marks chiselled into a granite piece.'

The devotee: 'Oh! it is so depressing! Sixty thousand years! We are then simply undone. The very idea dries up our life's current.'

Lātu Maharaj: 'Yes, you may say so. But without infinite patience who has ever known the Lord? You are terrified at hearing this period of sixty thousand years. Have you not read in the *Bhagavata* the story of a devotee who danced in joy when he was told he would have to practise for a lakh of years more to receive the Lord's grace, and said, "Compared to infinite time a lakh of years is just a few days". Moreover he thought, "When the Lord's vision is assured this petty period of a lakh of years will not be spent in vain also". With each year he will have become purer (to receive His grace). This is the reason of his dance in joy. . . . The blessings of great souls do not go in vain. They produce sure results. In an intense life ten years' work is done in ten days. Intensity is a great thing.' When Maharaj was thus speaking his whole body was blazing in excitement.

In this Pande Hauli's house Lātu Maharaj gave permission to a young man to stay with him. The young man though poor was intelligent. He was suffering from an incurable disease (suspected to be pthisis) due to which his relatives had scruples to allow him to mix with them freely. Lātu Maharaj kept him there without the least hesitation and in six months the young man was completely cured of the fell disease. The young man is still



alive and is an M.A., and a professor in some college.<sup>1</sup> We have heard from this gentleman that Lātu Maharaj asked him to bathe daily in the Ganges early morning and take Viswanatha's '*tirtham*'<sup>2</sup> together with offered *bilwa* leaves, which instructions he scrupulously followed. He took no other medicine except that.

Many other youths, when they came to know of the miraculous cure of this gentleman, requested Lātu Maharaj to treat them also in the same way. All got the same reply from him — 'There is the real physician, Viswanatha, there; have faith in Him and follow what the other young man has done; you also will get cured.'

Once a brother of a devotee got out of wits. He was so violent that doctors and physicians refused to treat him. The devotee wrote a letter to Lātu Maharaj stating his hopeless plight. Lātu Maharaj simply wrote back, 'Through the grace of Viswanatha the boy will get cured'. In fact since then the patient started improving. The patient could not have a wink of sleep for twenty days. How could he have such a deep unbroken sleep throughout the day and night, after they received the reply, nobody could give any rational explanation of. He did not undergo any treatment, took no medicine. The devotee has the firm faith that it is Maharaj's blessings that cured the patient.

A young man of U.P. used to come to Lātu Maharaj at Pande Hauli's house. He took his M.A. degree, and was humble and devoted. Every one called him *bhakatji* (the devoted one). He would often read the *Ramayana* of Tulsidas to Lātu Maharaj. One day Lātu Maharaj got a letter from this

Bhakatji's wife. She had complaints against her husband. Bhakatji was then not at the Ashrama. He had gone to his office. Lātu Maharaj said, 'Just see how things have changed. Bhakatji is looking after the lady all right, sending her money regularly, is meeting all her needs whenever they are brought to his notice; what else should he do? should he convert himself into her slave, only because he has married her? The modern demand is, just after marriage the wife should always be by the side of the husband. How many days those ideal women of olden days, Sita, Savitri, Damayanti, could be together with their husbands? Still they loved their husbands so dearly. And these ladies think that unless they live with their husbands they are neglected. Those manners are fast changing; and the inevitable results are not slow to raise their ugly heads — there are quarrels and worries everywhere'.

During the Durga Puja in 1914 there was a big get-together of devotees at Pande Hauli's house. Biharibabu and Saratbabu came to Varanasi that year. On the Mahāṣṭami day both of them were discussing, on the terrace, the topics of the Upaniṣads — one was supporting dualism, another non-dualism, as the conclusion of the Upaniṣads. At last they came to the conclusion that through renunciation, dispassion, and spiritual practices one must have direct experience of truth first then one can understand the Upaniṣads properly; else it is mere dry logic-chopping. Hearing this, Lātu Maharaj said, 'You have spoken the truth. Now-a-days people have neither renunciation nor spiritual practice to their credit, yet how prompt are they to find fault with the conclusions of the Rishis! Little do they understand that ratiocination may bring in fame as a scholar, but cannot reveal Truth, which can only be had through hard spiritual practices'.

(To be continued)

<sup>1</sup> These 'Memoirs' were first compiled and written in the year 1940 and so the person referred to here may have by now retired from service.

<sup>2</sup> The sacred water, in which the Deity is bathed and thus sanctified, is called *tirtham*.



## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S CONCEPTION OF COMMUNICATION MEDIA

SWAMI RASAJNANANDA

THE public activities of Swami Vivekananda covered barely a decade. The unknown, unsheltered delegate without credentials became world-famous at the World's Parliament of Religions that opened its deliberations on September 11, 1893. The bell that tolled at the Art Palace in Chicago to announce the opening day of the Parliament may be said to have announced the opening day of Swamiji's cyclonic activity 'for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many'. But his eventful life was cut short by premature demise on July 4, 1902. Within this short span of less than a decade, he had to deliver his man-making message that would hold good for centuries and inaugurate a movement of constructive work that would bid fair to do good to the individual and to the world. Obviously there was hardly any time for him to systematically arrange all his thoughts and plans. However, we have in his speeches and writings the fundamental principles of his ideas and ideals and an outline of his plan of action. It is for us to develop details suited to the needs of the time in the light of his thoughts.

Bearing this in mind, we shall have an idea of communication media and audio-visual aids for education of the rural masses according to Swami Vivekananda. The immense poverty of the land makes it not feasible for the masses to approach a teacher or go to school. They would rather like to go to the field or factory to make a living. As the saying goes, if the mountain cannot come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. 'If the poor cannot come to education' Swamiji said, 'education must reach them at the plough, in the factory, everywhere.' The teacher or the worker has to instruct the villagers in their cottages or farms. He should come down to the level of the latter, understand their lot

and look at the world through their eyes. With genuine sympathy in the heart and a sense of sincere concern for the masses, he must approach and identify himself with them. Then he will be able to tell them and make them understand, 'You are our brothers, a part and parcel of ourselves'. The means to win their confidence lies through the heart. What matters in motivating them is the language of the heart. Swamiji asks the educator or the worker, 'Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud? Does it make you restless? Does it make you sleepless? . . . Are you seized with the one idea of the misery of ruin, and have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies? Have you done that? That is the very first step to become a patriot — the very first step.' The social educator's attitude is not of patronising or condescending nature. He should realize that he owes a debt to the community at whose expense he has been educated. By disseminating knowledge he only repays the debt to the community. An educator of this type is the proper person to communicate knowledge to the people.

As early as 1894, Swamiji pleads for the use of audio-visual aids in the education of the masses. He instructs the workers to go from one part of the country to another, from village to village with cameras, globes, maps etc. In that case, he opines 'They can teach a great deal of astronomy and geography to the ignorant'. In those days the audio-visual instruments were not developed as today. However, Swamiji is perhaps the first of our national leaders to suggest the use of modern as well as traditional audio-visual aids and to foresee the efficacious role that they can play in imparting knowledge to the villagers. His



direction to the workers to kindle the knowledge of the poor people with the help of modern science is better appreciated today than in his time. Modern science can profitably be harnessed to the service of the ignorant masses. Swamiji observes that 'by telling stories about different nations, they (the educators) can give the poor a hundred times more information through the ear than they can get in a lifetime through books'. Here we get a clue to the method of communication. It should be as simple, interesting and indirect as possible. Entertainments like *yātra*, drama and fair have their own appeal to the rural folk and can be effectively used as communication media. Modern technical aids such as film shows and radio programmes may be made to serve the educational needs of the villagers.

What should be the content of communication according to Swamiji? It is his ambition in life 'to set in motion a machinery which will bring noble ideas to the door of everybody'. 'Go and advise them (the people) how to improve their own condition and make them understand the sublime truths of the *śāstras* . . . Also instruct them, in simple words, about the necessities of life, and in trade, commerce, agriculture etc.' 'Teach them History, Geography, Science, Literature and along with these the profound truths of Religion.' In a word, secular and spiritual knowledge is to be imparted. The villagers need to learn western science so that they may stand on their own feet and apply modern techniques to agriculture and industries. They should be enthused to acquire knowledge of health and hygiene, arts and crafts, civics and politics, economics and sociology, morality and spirituality. Swamiji says, 'Let them know what our forefathers as well as other nations have thought on the most momentous questions of life. Let them see specially what others are doing now, and then decide'. It is for the masses to work out their future. The only help that they require is the gift of positive, strength-giving and elevating ideas that will develop their lost individuality.

The medium of instruction for the masses

should, of course, be the mother tongue. They will thereby get information. But, in Swamiji's view, something more is essential and that is culture. He avers : 'Until you can give that, there can be no permanence in the raised condition of the masses'. It is being realized today in the West that mere literacy or education for vocation without attention to cultural study will not bring about healthy, desirable change in society. In our country, Sanskrit is the vehicle of our age-old culture and its study should be fostered to invest our race with prestige and power. Religion is an integral part of our culture. Nay, Swamiji declares time and again in unambiguous terms, 'Religion and religion alone is the life of India, and when that goes, India will die, in spite of Kubera's wealth poured upon the head of every one of her children'. Hence he unmistakably instructs us : 'Before flooding India with socialistic or political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas. . . . After preaching spiritual knowledge, along with it will come that secular knowledge and every other knowledge that you want ; but if you attempt to get the secular knowledge without religion, I tell you plainly, vain is your attempt in India, it will never have a hold on the people'. No idea strikes root on the Indian soil unless it is conveyed through the medium of religion. By religion Swamiji does not mean sectarianism and communalism, nor casteism, nor local customs and superstitions, nor magic and mummeries. What he means by religion is infinite strength, *shraddhā*, self-confidence, fearlessness, freedom, realization of and service to the Divine in man, profound and perennial principles enshrined in the Śrutis, particularly the Upaniṣads.

Communication medium is but a means. If it is to serve the ultimate purpose of uplift of the masses, what is required is a band of dedicated workers. Swamiji said, 'Men, men — these are wanted ; everything else will be ready ; but strong, vigorous, believing young men, sincere to the backbone are wanted'. Money is insignificant in comparison with men, for it is men who make money and not *vice versa*. The Government is allocating



crores of rupees for welfare projects. But it is not known how much benefit the community reaps, because of paucity of men of character and proper perspectives. According to Swamiji, 'the wonderful structures of national life which the Western nations have raised are supported by the strong pillars of character'. Without false pride we have to learn it from the West, for, even after seventeen years of Indepen-

dence, we have failed to raise our national structure on the strong pillar of character. No amount of communication media and audio-visual aids are of avail unless sacrificing, selfless workers are recruited for the noble cause of education of the rural masses and unless our private and public standard is raised to the pitch of purity, strength and manliness worthy of the glory that is India.

## SOME OBSERVATIONS ON INDIAN MUSIC

SWAMI GNANESWARANANDA

FROM time immemorial spirituality has been the only objective of the individual as well as the national life of India. The entire scholastic field, science, arts and crafts, of the Hindus are mere attempts at expressing and symbolising 'Satyam, Shivam, and Sundaram', (truth, well-being, and beauty), in various forms. It is here that the significance of Hinduism, Indian nationalism, lies embedded. It was as a result of this fervour that hundreds of millennia ago, in the quiet hermitages of the Rishis, the air hummed with the deep, resonant, musical tones of the Sāma music. This Sāma Veda is the sacred source and authority of Hindu music.

Music is a spontaneous, artistic instinct of man. From the progressive, highly civilized human being to the uncivilized, uncultured primitive man, everyone attempts to express the emotional upsurge of the heart through some form of music. This is the reason that led an ancient poet to describe a person bereft of musical culture as 'an animal without horns and tail'. Just as music has an unparalleled influence in achieving the progressive development of the naturally good instincts of the human heart, likewise, it commands tremendous power in exciting low and vulgar thoughts. Among the progressive section of people, and the devotees, one type of music is fondly cultivated. While, in order to add fuel to the fire of base sensual passions, another kind of music is assiduously nurtur-

ed by the low-minded. Hence it is absolutely essential to adopt special care in the culture of such a deeply influencing art as music. Whose mind is not chastened by listening to the enthralling songs of a devout singer? Similarly, men find it difficult to control carnal desires after listening to voluptuous songs. The western poet Dryden has truly said: 'What passion cannot music rouse and quell?' Indeed, as a step towards the attainment of spiritual realization, as well as an ingredient for sensual pleasures, music plays an important part in all societies.

Hindu music is generally of two types, the predominant factor in them being either musical notes, or the wording of the songs. The highest skill is shown in the first category, both in vocal and in instrumental music. But these finer points are appreciated only by connoisseurs. On the other hand, in the other type in which words are more important, greater emphasis is laid on the expression of ideas and of weaving them into a fabric. In the deft use of words, where the expression of feeling as well as the capacity to generate that feeling is most important, lies the speciality of the latter. This is why the second type of music is more appreciated by the general public.

In order to raise the standard of good music it is very necessary to preserve the sanctity and the uniqueness of the art, along with the purity, solemnity and sweetness of expression. Although it may not be apparent to a layman



that there is an equally subtle but potent force inherent in the purity of the musical tones, as there is an attraction and charm in the composition of words, it can be realized that if any classical artist merely repeats the formula of the musical tune of any Raga or Ragini correctly and melodiously, different feelings are experienced by the display of the different musical tones. It can easily be seen, therefore, how powerful the influence of music would be, if expressed through chaste and melodious words, with appropriate Raga, rhythm and tonal quality. In this respect classical musicians and popular artistes of language-oriented songs, like *kirtan* and *bhajan*, are both extremists, one set pursuing art without ideas, and the other trying to project an idea, by by-passing art. Indeed the way to promote the art of music while preserving the distinct national character of the Hindus, is the harmonious synthesis of the systems of the two extreme schools.

The great seer, Swami Vivekananda, who was himself a *maestro*, hinted at this idea in his intricate but significant picture in 'Bhavbar Katha', (Matters for Serious Thinking). The narrative is quoted below :

'A man came to visit the Lord. The sight of the Lord gave him great pleasure and filled his heart with devotion. As a *quid pro quo* he started singing. A Chowbeji, priest, was dozing on the verandah, reclining on a pillar. The Chowbeji, the priest of the temple, was a wrestler, a skilful player of the sitar ; and he was a good hand at swallowing two jugfuls of *bhang* (an intoxicating drink) twice daily. He also had other admirable qualities ! Suddenly a loud shrieking sound assailed his tympanum, and the fantastic universe conjured up under the influence of the inebriating liquor seemed to leave the 42<sup>nd</sup> bosom of Chowbeji for a time. Casting his slightly drooping, reddish eyes around to find out the cause of his distraction he discovered that a man was sitting deeply absorbed before the Lord, vainly mimicking the songs of the great exponents of music, Narada, Hanuman, Bharata and Nayaka, while singing in a dolorous voice, as piercing as the scouring of

cauldrons in a festive house. The mortified Chowbeji in a sharp, reprimanding tone addressed the man, who had been the direct obstacle to his enjoyment of that peculiar bliss of inebriation ! 'Well', he asked, 'why are you shouting in a discordant note, careless of time and tune ?' Pat came the reply, 'What is the necessity of musical tune or measure ? I am pleasing the Lord.'

Quick came the response from Chowbeji, 'The Lord is not a fool ! Are you mad ? You have not been able to please me. Is the Lord more unenlightened ?'

Aiming at another set of extremists Swami Vivekananda says : 'Even sages cannot say whether some are singing a song, or crying, or quarrelling, or what the idea or purpose of the song is. What intricate contours and twists ! Then, there are the so-called songs sung in imitation of the Moslem music masters, through the nose with the teeth pressed against each other ! The only way to correct such ludicrous acts is to impress upon all that music which has no deep emotion and no life, is no music at all.'

Hence, in order to attain a higher excellence in classical music it is absolutely necessary to cultivate, fervently, music of a lofty character, in pure melody and tones. There are many touching *bhajans* by eminent saints in all the Indian languages. Wide circulation of such songs would benefit the country considerably. It is manifest to everyone that such songs send a thrill through the listener when sung correctly. Ramakrishna repeatedly fell into deep *Samadhi* while singing such songs in an emotional strain, with correct notes and tunes, and he elevated the minds of his listeners to a transcendental plane. On the other hand, while listening to musicians who distorted the melodies and notes he became disturbed.

Reciprocally, the audience should also have such feelings. Otherwise songs fail to create an impression. This was convincingly illustrated in the life of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, when his feelings were disturbed at a *kirtan* owing to the presence of Srivasa's mother-in-law, and in the life of Sri Ramakrishna when Rani Rasmani was chastised by



him for thinking of mundane affairs while listening to his songs. Indeed, feeling is the life of music. Feeling makes one forgetful of self. Music can really achieve its consummation only if it touches the sympathetic chords of the heart of both the singer and the listener. Again, it is not possible to touch the hearts of others unless one is oneself deeply moved.

Music which keeps the glamour of the external world in view and which caters for attaining honour, glory, or wealth, cannot evoke a sympathetic response. It is saltless; so to say, made to order. There is a relevant story about the great master, Tansen, in this context. It is said that one day Akbar, while out hunting, heard Tansen singing in a very melodious voice in a lonely place on the bank of the Yamuna. The Emperor had never heard Tansen sing so well. His vanity was wounded and he thought: 'Does Tansen sing carelessly in my Court?'

Unobserved by Tansen the Emperor returned to his capital. The next day Tansen was summoned to the Court of Justice. He was surprised and bewildered; he failed to understand the cause of his offence. The Emperor asked, in a voice full of annoyance, 'Do you not sing in a more melodious voice elsewhere than you do in my Court?' Then Tansen understood everything. His face lit up with a divine glow. His whole demeanour blazed with power and he replied, 'Perhaps songs are better sung before an audience more appreciative than the Court of Delhi!' The Emperor flashed his angry eyes and demanded, 'Who is that connoisseur?' Tansen replied, 'He is the Lord of the universe'. The haughty Emperor was astonished. He rose from his throne, overjoyed, and embraced Tansen.

Music, fundamentally, does not know any distinction of nationality, caste, or creed. It is the basic longing of the soul to be united with its infinite Source. The finite soul, which is not really finite, retains the memory — like a forgotten dream — of its pristine glory, of its perfection. It remembers this like a dream, and there is a yearning within the soul to regain that lost, that forgotten, state of absolute

perfection. Music was the first expression of that yearning. When the deepest chord of the heart is touched, either by joy or by sorrow, it expresses itself in the form of music.

There is a legend regarding the origin of Indian music. From an ordinary, unlettered man I gathered the following story of how singing came into existence:

One day a star strayed away from its heavenly home. Then it fell on earth. It felt very lonely, forlorn, being so far away from its heavenly home. It felt small, felt it had lost its glory. It looked all around but found no trace of its previous home and companions. Night came, and the little star looked up into the sky. It saw the firmament sparkling with myriads of stars, its own companions, and it yearned to go back to them. It cried out plaintively, longingly but the stars were high above and did not seem to hear the lonely little star. That crying out by the lost star was the beginning of music.

It is my conviction that the human soul began to sing even before it evolved a language; not only the human soul but the animal souls as well. Just as the birds sing, so the beasts also sing. There is song in the roaring of the lion, there is song in the neighing of the horse, and even in the clash of thunder there is song. Even the trees, the mountains, the rivers and the seas have their own music. Just as the human kind, all creation expresses itself through music. There is song in everything. Early Indian sages discovered an eternal music in nature and called it the music of the spheres.

One may ask, how did the science of Hindu music originate? The story is told that Rishi Bharata, who is supposed to be the originator of modern Indian music (by modern, I mean after the earliest Vedic music), wanted to find out the fundamental principle of music. He wanted to discover the alphabet of music, and like all ancient Indian mystics he retired to a forest to meditate on the subject. The legend goes that when he was almost ready to give up his efforts as in vain, he heard seven different animals make their distinctive sounds in rhythmic



succession. Those seven sounds are now known as the seven fundamental notes of the musical scale. (Sa-re-ga, etc. of Indian music, or do-re-mi, etc. of western music.)

In fact, the names of these notes in the Indian terminology, still retain the names of the animals from whom the scale was derived by Bharata. Sa, *saraja*, came from the peacock ; Re, *rishaba*, from the bull ; Ga, *gāndhāra*, from the goat ; Ma, *madhyama*, from the crane ; Pa, *panchama*, from the cuckoo ; Dha, *dhaivata*, from the horse ; and Ni, *nishāda*, from the elephant. Having discovered these seven principal notes Bharata tried to reproduce them artificially. He first tried with a piece of bamboo and a *tāra*. *Tāra* may mean a line, wire, string, or gut. We do not know, of course, what *tāra* he used, but he succeeded in imitating those sounds on an instrument. Later on, other Rishis discovered that between the seven primary notes there could be many more vibrations of sound and the scale grew to include twenty-two different tones. Each of these has a special character of its own, and the science of Raga was based on the artistic and harmonious mixing of these different tones, as in the mixing of colours, to express certain moods and feelings.

Like all other traditional Indian arts music

is symbolic and suggestive. In and through certain subtle symbols of melody and rhythm it attempts to give expression in the human mind to fine emotions and sentiments, which one so often feels but cannot express in language. Thus, Indian music serves the purpose of a common, universal language to communicate the finer sentiments of the human heart. It is much more powerful than language.

The enjoyment of Indian music lies in your own introspection and meditation, rather than in the enjoyment of the external sense of hearing. The outer music, which you hear from a musician, is only a symbol with the aid of which you can go deeper into your own innermost recesses of thought. There you may enjoy the real music.

Music in India, although handed down verbally, has always played a vital role in the spiritual life of the country. Great Bhaktas like Mirabai, Ramprasad, and others have made invaluable contributions to the living library of sacred music in this land. Such music is a potent force for concentrating the minds of spiritual aspirants on the particular aspect of God they worship.

Throughout the world music of some sort stirs the hearts of all. May it lead them, eventually, to the highest goal.

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Each one of us is engaged in some work, but the majority of us fritter away the greater portions of our energies, because we do not know the secret of work. Karma Yoga explains this secret and teaches where and how to work, how to employ to the greatest advantage the largest part of our energies in the work that is before us. But with this secret we must take into consideration the great objection against work, namely, that it causes pain. All misery and pain come from attachment. I want to do work, I want to do good to a human being ; and it is ninety to one that that human being whom I have helped will prove ungrateful, and go against me ; and the result to me is pain. Such things deter mankind from working ; and it spoils a good portion of the work and energy of mankind, this fear of pain and misery. Karma Yoga teaches us how to work for work's sake, unattached, without caring who is helped, and what for.

— SWAMI VIVEKANANDA



# THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

M. FEROZE

MOST of the educationists started their educational philosophy as mere theories. On the contrary people who have little idea of what they should actually accomplish, are really quick to grasp at straws. Swami Vivekananda was not an exponent of educational philosophy in the strict sense. Yet like the great educationists, Pestalozzi, Froebel and Spencer he knew what was wrong with our system of education. He also had suggested the remedial measures. Swami Vivekananda was a philosopher who felt, valued, acted and experienced in every kind of way.

The university training, according to him, of the Indian student is almost wholly unrelated to the real thoughts and aspirations of mind. This sort of education leads to cultural suicide and economic helplessness. This is called higher education. Today our best plans miscarry because they are in the hands of people who have undergone no inner growth. Our education has failed to initiate the pupil into the inner significance of information in general. Confusion about the ends and aims of education is no new thing. Such a state is hereditary to human civilization and the great philosophers and educationists keep on reducing the seriousness of the problems by refining the already existing philosophies.

Defining the educational philosophy is far from being a simple matter, and this inquiry has engaged the serious efforts of nearly all professional philosophers of education for many ages. The result is that no one in this field can safely assume any common understanding as to the scope, method and literature of the philosophy of education. Traditionally the philosophy has included metaphysics, epistemology (the study of the principles of knowledge), logic, ethics and aesthetics. Philosophy of education in the most

general sense is the application of philosophy and the methods of philosophy to problems of education and the problems of life in a wider sense. Education is a purposive activity towards ends which are good. Philosophy of education should show the implications for education of knowledge, values and religion. Any philosophy should be a possible help to human beings in practical situations.

Aristotle and his contemporaries found it extremely difficult to agree on a suitable pattern of education for the young because contemporary social conditions were in a state of accelerated change. Similarly in the days of Swamiji commercial economy and social institutions were lifting India from superstitious forms of life.

The age-old question about how to educate our children for the dynamic social conditions in which they live was asked, as it is done even today. The answers were confused and faltering.

Some thought that the only way to train the pupils to meet the changing times is with an education that is progressive. According to them education should be the constant reconstruction of experience. Others believed that we must have a programme of traditional studies of values leading to some sort of stability. Yet others preferred an increasing emphasis on religious education. Others, however, took no comfort in a supernatural orientation of education and thought that man must stand on his own feet to solve his problems.

Some philosophers actually succeed in achieving a unitary or monistic point of view as the totalitarianism of fascist education. Other philosophies find unity in diversity. Philosophy where educational practice is determined by two distinct orders of thought, such as the natural and the supernatural, is the



philosophy of education recommended by Swamiji.

All the philosophies and aims of education can be classified under two headings: (1) Narrow and (2) Broad. The Spartan education emphasizing on military proficiency, the colonial emphasis on theology, American pragmatism, French emphasis on intellectualism, Prussian regimentation and obedience, English stress on Greek, Latin and sports, German racism, are all examples for the narrower concepts of educational philosophy. On the contrary the Athenian aim for the individual excellence for state usefulness, Pestalozzi's natural progressive and harmonious development of the powers, Froebel's developing the latent powers of the individual into 'the live creative power', Spencer's preparation for complete living and Gandhiji's life-centered education are the examples for broader concepts of educational philosophy.

Swami Vivekananda believes in the innate good nature and potentialities of man. According to him education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man. Modern psychologists believe that children differ in the make-up and rate of development of their abilities and potential abilities may be nurtured to a great extent than has often been supposed. Every individual is unique and this uniqueness has its beauty. Swamiji, in the same way, believed that the work of the teacher was only to remove the obstacles and help the child grow. He says, 'you cannot teach a child any more than you can grow a plant. The plant develops its own nature. The child also teaches itself. But you can help it to go forward in its own way. You can take away the obstacles, and knowledge comes out easily. Put a hedge round it; see that it is not killed by anything . . . within man is all knowledge, and it requires only an awakening'. His views of education are very modern. To him, 'Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, un-

digested all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, assimilation of ideas'.

The recent educational philosophers and educationists believe that all education should lead to the development of a wholesome personality. For them the essential meaning of personality is selfhood, self-consciousness, self-control and the power to know. Swami Vivekananda gives due stress to the development of personality. The world is one of influence. The development of personal and inter-personal life has been taken as a key objective of good education. Swamiji does not stop with this. His concept of wholesome personality is the realization of the self with respect to the supreme Self. Personality is the most important thing a man must possess. 'The personality of man is two-thirds, and his intellect, his word are but one-third. It is the real man, the personality of the man, that runs through us.'

Swami Vivekananda's educational philosophy has definitely a broader concept. His philosophy comes closer to the philosophies of Pestalozzi and Froebel than to those of Spencer and Dewey. The preparation for complete living and enriching the living could not form even the beginning of his philosophy. Nor his aim is to combine the natural and supernatural but to spiritualize life. This is the supreme form of educational philosophy. Certain aspects of the narrower concepts of education have been related to higher stages in his philosophy. He does not neglect the need for good physique, but at the same time avoids the Spartan military proficiency. He also does not forget the national aims of the Athenian, nor the bread-earning aim of Spencer and the pragmatic approach of Dewey. He had all appreciation for the industrial progress of America, yet there is something more in his philosophy. Though a full-fledged educational philosophy as such could not be attributed to Swami Vivekananda, it is extremely clear that he had an all-round aim of education of his own.



## KOLARU PADHIKAM

(or the song describing the warding off bad planetary influences  
by Tirugnana Sambandar)

T. R. RAJAGOPALA IYER

SAINT TIRUGNANA SAMBANDAR is one of the four great acknowledged Tamil Saivite Samaya Kuravars or religious saints and leaders; the other three are Appar or Tiru Navukkarasu, Sundarar and Manikkavachakar. All the four were poets. Sambandar was born in modern Sirkhazhi in the Tanjore district styled Thonipuram and Brahmapuram in olden days. The occasion for this song as described in the Periapuranam, the hagiological poem composed by Sekkizhar, was this: Sambandar had made a great name in the Tanjore district by his saintly life and fervid psalms. The Pandian king had fallen under the influence of the Jains and become a convert to Jainism. In those days when the personal influence of the king counted a great deal, many of his subjects, either out of fear or to gain his favour, had forsaken the old religion for the new. The Pandian queen Mangayarkarasi and the minister Kulachirai Nayanar were staunch Saivites, but even they had to practise their religion in secret. They wanted to reclaim the king and the Pandya kingdom to the traditional Saivite religion. Hearing about the greatness of the marvellous boy-saint Sambandar and the Saivite revival he had ushered in the Tanjore district, and that he was now close to the border at Vedaranyam, they sent messengers to invite him to Madura. The agents of the queen and minister found a ready response in the saint, but filled his admirer and companion Saint Appar with dismay. This is how Sakkizhar describes the issue:— 'And thus spake Appar, the king of divine speech, "Thou art but a stripling. There is no end to the deceits and treacheries of the Jains. There is one further objection. The planets stand baleful. So you should not agree

to go". Unto which the high-souled Sambandar replied, "If what I think and praise constantly are the tinkling feet of our Lord, no harm will touch me". So saying the chief of Puhali town, Sambandar, ever bound unto the rosy fragrant feet of God, sang the decade beginning with "the Lord of Uma with bamboo-like shapely shoulders".

Saint Sambandar has declared in this poem what Socrates also did, that saints are moved by an inner 'Daemon', the inner voice of God, and are not guided or affected by the planets, and they care little for the prognostications of astrology. Sambandar set forth for Madura, overthrew the Jains in debates, reconverted the Pandyan king and re-established his kingdom in its pristine Saivism. The refrain of this decade is 'since the Lord God hath entered my loving heart, neither the nine planets nor the days, nor the three kinds of ills to which all beings are subject — Adhyātmika, Adhi-bhautika, Adhi-daivika, will touch me, but they will be transmuted into good'. The last and eleventh verse states the name of the author, the occasion giving rise to the composition and the *phala śruti* or result of reading the poem.

It is translated into English for the benefit of those not knowing Tamil.

- (1) 'The Lord of Her with bamboo-like  
shapely shoulders,  
He who quaffed the deadly Kālakoota  
poison  
Out of His grace abounding and saved  
the world;  
He who loveth to play on His Veena  
Divine,  
He who wears the spotless crescent  
moon,  
And the holy Gaṅgā on His head,



Since He hath chosen to enter my  
loving heart  
Surya, Chandra, Angāraka, Budha,  
Bṛhaspati,  
Śukra and Śanaishcara, with Rāhu and  
Ketu,  
The eclipsing ones, all the planets nine,  
Bear no evil ; but portend good, good  
only.

(2) ' He who weareth bones, a tusk of boar,  
and Koorma's tortoise shell on breast,  
He who rideth on His bull divine with  
fair Uma by His side  
He who wears the golden garland of  
Oomatta flowers  
And the rushing Gaṅgā on His crest,  
Since He hath chosen to enter my  
loving heart,  
The Stars that stand cross unto my  
natal one,  
And all the rest, shed sweet influence  
of love,  
They portend good, good alone,  
And turn auspicious unto the devotee  
of the Lord.

(3) ' He whose sheen is fiery like that of  
coral red,  
Bestriped with gleaming sacred ashes  
white ;  
He who mounts the dazzling whitish  
bull with fair Uma by His side ;  
He who wears the budding Konrai on  
His head.  
Along with the crescent moon streak ;  
Since He hath chosen to enter my  
loving heart,  
Lakṣmi, who dispenseth fortune,  
Durga, who rideth the antlered stag,  
And she the patient Mother-earth,  
The guardian deities of the quarters,  
And all the congregation of the gods,  
They turn into rare and divine wealth,  
They are good, aye ever good,  
And remain auspicious unto the de-  
votee of the Lord.

(4) ' Our Lord who sits along with Her who  
adorns  
Her forehead with the glancing cres-  
cent slip,  
Under the branching banyan tree,  
Expounding the Vedas' mystic lore  
To those who seek it in earnest quest,  
He who with the holy river winds  
round His locks  
A garland of the fragrant Konrai  
flowers ;

Since He hath chosen to enter my  
loving heart,  
Raging Time, devouring fire, Death's  
very messengers  
And the countless ills which assail men,  
Get transmuted into good, good a  
thousand-fold  
They turn out good, veritable good  
Unto the devotee of the Lord.

(5) ' He whose throat is tinted dark,  
By the poison He drank to save the  
worlds,  
Father mine, who rideth the bull divine,  
Along with fair Uma by His side ;  
He who weareth the Vanni on his crest,  
Under whose umbrageous boughs dark  
night dwells and sleeps,  
Along with the golden Konrai flowers ;  
Since He hath chosen to enter my  
loving heart,  
Asuras and Rākṣasas of raging wrath,  
The baser side of man on earth,  
Growling thunder, flashing lightning,  
And all dire evils from the elements  
five.  
Which men fear and try to 'scape  
Turn good, very good, and auspicious,  
Unto the devotees of the Lord.

(6) ' He whose cloak is the striped tiger-skin,  
Whose wear is only the loin-cloth,  
Who weareth the ever-fresh fragrant  
flowers,  
Of the Vanni and the Konrai trees,  
Who bareth the holy Gaṅgā on His  
head,  
Since He along with fair Uma by His  
side,  
Hath chosen to enter my loving heart,  
The fierce lion and tiger with madden-  
ed elephant,  
Tusked boar, deadly serpent, and the  
grizly bear  
And other sworn foes of man turn  
gentle,  
And become good and abide good  
Unto the servant of the Lord.

(7) ' He who mounteth the lordly bull  
Ardhanari who hath yielded His left-  
ward half  
Unto Her with shapely breasts ;  
He who weareth the peerless disc  
Of the silvery crescent-moon,  
And the gushing holy Gaṅgā's waters,  
On His matted crest entangled,  
Since He hath chosen to enter my  
loving heart,



Neither raging fever, or extreme chill,  
Nor cramping rheum, or queasy bile,  
Nor all the ills and distempers beset-  
ting man

Harm him ; they loose their edge, and  
afflict no more ;

But turn so indescribably good, ex-  
ceeding good ;

They change into good, and remain  
aye good,

Unto the worshipper of the Lord.

- (8) ' He whose third eye on forehead,  
Blazed in wrath and consumed quite  
The vain sacrifice by Daksha begun  
Without portion unto Him the only  
God ;  
He who mounts on Nandi with Uma  
fair ;  
He who wears the fair crescent Vanni  
and Konrai flowers,  
On His matted locks in adornment ;  
Since He hath chosen to enter my  
loving heart,  
Neither Ravana the unconquerable  
Bastioned within the seven seas, in  
Lañka impregnable,  
Type of the ten organs in man en-  
trenched,  
Nor any other ills to which flesh is  
heir unto,  
Hurt man ; the deep seas change into  
good, very good,  
Unto the humble servant of the Lord.

- (9) ' He who taketh all these diverse forms  
we see,  
Lord of Uma, chiefest among women,  
Our Lord who mounteth the bull  
divine,  
And wears the river-goddess and  
Erukku flowers on crest,  
Since He hath chosen to enter my  
loving heart,  
Creator Brahmā, sprung from Vishnu's  
navel,

And the Vedas, gods, and times to  
come,

With golden Meru, centre of the earth,  
And earth itself girdled by the seas,  
Turn good, veritable good,  
Unto the devotee of the Lord.

- (10) ' He who with Uma a huntress fair,  
Wearing Himalayan flowers on Her  
hair,  
Assumed hunter's form with grace  
divine,  
To grant Arjuna in penance severe,  
The secret of Pāśupatāstra  
Which none but He could wield ;  
Since He wearing Mata, Moon, and  
serpent,  
On His crest, hath chosen to enter my  
loving heart,  
His charmed ashes are sure to put to  
flight  
Baudha and Jain in debate fierce ;  
They are so good, exceeding good,  
Unto the devotee of the Lord.

- (11) ' In the fair village of Brahmapura,  
where the four-faced  
Creator Brahmā and the other gods  
live and dwell,  
Where bees buzz round sugarcane vats  
in gardens odorous,  
And golden grains grow lush and thick,  
they who read  
With faith day by day,  
'These verses sung by Sage Gnana-  
sambanda,  
Who is versed in holy Vedic lore,  
And hath realized the mystic truth in  
them,  
These verses sung to ward the banes,  
Shed by the planets and the days,  
They are sure, very sure, to reign in  
heaven  
No empty vaunt this, but one I swear.'

As soon as extreme attachment comes, a man loses himself, he is no more master of himself, he is a slave. Love and do good to everybody, but do not become a slave. There should be no jealousy in regard to objects of the senses ; jealousy is the root of all evil, and a most difficult thing to conquer. . . . It is very true that mind is the master, but very few of us are not bound by the senses. We are all controlled by matter, and as long as we are so controlled, we must take material aids (for the realization of God).

— SWAMI VIVEKANANDA



## SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

### (Reminiscences of a Devotee)

THE lives and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples have now become, more or less, world-famous. But, when I first met Swami Ramakrishnananda, about sixty years ago, the position was quite different. Not even one in a hundred among the college students or the educated public had heard about Sri Ramakrishna. A few were acquainted with the name of Swami Vivekananda. I first heard of his name from a boarder in a boarding house, that a Sannyasin known as Vivekananda had gone to America and delivered lectures there and had converted some Americans to the Hindu way of thinking. The notion prevalent among us at that period was that the putting on of holy ashes, sandal paste etc. and the going to temple constituted the essentials of Religion and that, if the recitation of the names of God and the japa of a Mantra be added to them, nothing more remained to be practised or known in religion.

It took two more years for me to hear the name of Sri Ramakrishna and to read some articles about him as well as Max Muller's celebrated book on his life and sayings. A short time later, I heard that some Sannyasins, perhaps disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, were residing at Triplicane, Madras. Next morning, I started for Triplicane. I wandered from place to place in search of the residence of the Sannyasins. At long last, someone informed me that some Sannyasins were living in a building called Ice House. It was a three-storied building on the sea-shore in Triplicane. I proceeded to the House. The threshold was a raised floor. I stood there for some time, and there came up a young man after his bath. He had a wet Kāshaya cloth in one of his hands. I told him, 'I have come to see the Swami'. He replied, 'Swamiji has gone to the town. He will return at noon. You can see him if you come here after taking

your meal'. Accordingly, I went back, took my meal and returned again to the place that very noon. The door was shut. I kept standing on the threshold. A simple man came from inside and opening the door asked me to go in. I descended from the threshold and entered a room which looked like a cellar.

#### FIRST MEETING

It was a fairly large room. There was a chair, a table and a bed-stead in the room. Some pictures hung on the walls. A cloth, like a carpet was spread on the floor for visitors to sit on. It was a visitor who had opened the door for me. He closed it again and sat down. I saw an imposing person in Kāshaya dress lying on the bed-stead. His eyes were closed. There was no one else in the room. I thought that the person was resting after taking his meal and so, I stood in the room for sometime, looking at the pictures on the walls. In four or five minutes, I heard him asking something and the visitor replying to it. I turned in that direction and stood in front of him. I do not remember whether I saluted him. It is certain that I did not prostrate before him. He asked me to sit down and inquired about me. I replied to his questions. I was too ignorant and dull-witted to ask him about important religious matters. But I remember my having asked him two questions. My first question was whether the Swami had been with Sri Ramakrishna. 'Yes' was his reply given very quietly. He seemed to have entered a thought-world and his answer appeared to come from afar. Did he feel that he was then also living with Sri Ramakrishna?

My second question was 'What is the object of life?' Straight came the answer, 'to know a spade as a spade'. I had ima-



gined that he would say that the object of life was the worship of God or the attainment of Moksha. But his reply was too abstruse for me. Seeing that I had not grasped the true import of his words, he tried to make his meaning clear. Yet I was not able to understand it properly. My knowledge and power of understanding were very poor. I do not now recollect what all he said then.

But, on another occasion, he explained the very same idea, by an illustration. It was somewhat like this : A little girl and her brother were playing together. After a time, the brother went away and came back before her, putting on a frightening mask on his face. The girl felt confounded, got frightened and loudly called out to her brother to come and save her. He was not to be seen. Then she began to weep in grief and terror. The brother immediately removed his mask and revealed himself. Then, they had a hearty laugh over it.

That day, he talked thus for a short time. He then rose, took a cocoanut laddu from a vessel kept in a niche and gave it to me saying 'you may eat it'. That sweetmeat was one of the kind relished by Sri Ramakrishna. Though small in size, it was very tasty. Later, he used to give the laddu of that or some other variety as Prasad, whenever I took leave of him. I do not remember whether he asked me to come again, as Sri Ramakrishna used to ask some devotees. But I felt that I should meet him again. I had many occasions since then to visit him. But I did not realize even to the slightest extent his towering greatness and could not benefit myself by acquiring valuable lessons from him. Such was the nature of my mind.

I used to go to him as a visitor and not as an earnest seeker of Truth. I felt that he was an extraordinary person, an eminent man. The colour of his body was golden with a ruddy tint. He had a strong physique. His height in stature was in proportion to the breadth of his body. His hands and feet as well as his fingers were tender. His eyes, though small, shone and revealed his keen intellect. He had a sweet voice. His bearing

was bold and imperious. I had not seen such a perfect man before. That attracted me and I went to see him again and again. But still, I did not ask him any question on religion. Once a visitor remarked about Sri Ramakrishna, 'He was a great man'. The Swamiji's face became a little flushed when he heard the remark. He said with a voice surcharged with emotion 'A great man ! Who are your great men ? Mere mud-worshippers, servants of their passions, such are your great men. Ramakrishna never worshipped mud. He worshipped God and God alone. He transcended the universe, came face to face with God and mercifully brought Him down to us, poor mortals. That was Ramakrishna'.

I have heard the Swami often utter the words, mud-worshippers, and slaves of passion. His talks and actions brimmed with intense renunciation, and contempt for the enjoyments of the world. A visitor was speaking about a somewhat distinguished man. Then the Swami burst out, 'Oh ! He wants to be a somebody in this cow-dung of a world ! No, it is not cow-dung ; that is at least useful and considered sacred ; it is worse than that and he wants to be a somebody in it'.

Another time, a gentleman said that he was reading the *Bhāgavata*. The Swami asked him to recite some verses from it. He began with the verses : श्रीकृष्ण जिष्णुसख etc. At once the Swami recited :

सत्यां क्षितौ किं कशिपोः प्रयासे-

बाँहो खसिद्धे द्युपवर्हणेः किम् ।

सत्यं जलौ किं पुरुषाक्षपात्राय

दिगवत्कलादौ सति किं दुकूलेः । II. ii. 4.

etc., breathing renunciation and sat absorbed in the bliss of the Ātman.

He did not care for the so-called pleasures and glamour of life in his habits and dress. He was never habituated to the wearing of a shirt. He never took to daily shave. When he went out, he put on a coat and wore a turban. He would have his head completely shaved twice a month. He was not habituated



to drinking tea or coffee. For the greater part of that period, he had no cook. At noon, he used to prepare food, offer it to Sri Ramakrishna and partake of the Prasad. He would strictly adhere to the practice of not taking anything which had not been offered to Sri Ramakrishna. Even when there were Brahmacharis or cooks in the Math, the Swami himself used to cut vegetables for the dishes to be prepared for offering.

It was the words, 'Sri Guru Maharaj' that he used generally when he wanted to refer to Sri Ramakrishna. He took special care in preparing food relished by Sri Ramakrishna. It was not by looking at the photo that he saw Sri Ramakrishna. But he actually saw the person living in flesh and blood.

He was Hanuman himself in Dasya Bhakti. His throat choked with deep emotion when he recited hymns to God. His voice rose to a high pitch and he would be absorbed while he uttered the names of God. There was once Bhajana in connection with the birthday celebration of Swami Vivekananda. A large picture of the Swamiji, ornamented with various decorations, was placed in front. Some 25 to 30 persons were singing the Kirtan. The Swami was sitting silent in their midst. The Kirtan went on for a few minutes. Suddenly the Swami stood up swayed by intense emotion and began himself to dance. His hands were raised and the head slightly tilted. For 15 to 20 minutes, he danced to the right and left and in a circle, each step being in accordance with the tune. All those who were engaged in the Kirtan, also danced along with him.

The Swami had unbounded devotion to Swami Vivekananda. His famous hymn, the Vivekananda Panchakam, testifies to this. A visitor once said something and cited Swami Vivekananda as authority in support of his statement. The Swami at once remarked with conviction, 'The great Swamiji would never have said like that. He was the very embodiment of Truth. Not one word against truth or fundamental principles could ever emerge from his lips'. The visitor later on realized

that he had misunderstood the words of Vivekananda.

While expounding the Advaita realization, the Swami would show its relation with the realization of God with form, pointing out their similarities and differences. He used to observe that practice of Advaita, if it does not proceed through the realization of God with form, would be often attended with undesirable results. Meditation on the form of God should not be given up. That Sādhana, properly practised according to the dictates of the Śāstras, will naturally lead to the realization of the formless aspect of God. For a long time, whose beginning cannot be known, the mind of man has been habituated to dwell in duality and to depend on some entity other than himself. So, the ordinary man, endowed with such a mind, will naturally feel much greater pain than that of death when his mind, without any external object to cling to, begins to dissolve in the Infinite. That may lead to very harmful results. Such is the purport of what the Swami said on the subject.

Even in the ordinary mood, the Swami had no body-consciousness. He remained in the consciousness of his true self, the Ātman. Once, while Lord Curzon, the then Viceroy, was in Madras on a visit, the Swami asked a person standing near him whether he would be going to meet the Viceroy. On his replying in the negative, the Swami was very glad and said, 'you are quite right. Why should you meet him? You are greater than him, or, for the matter of that, than even the Emperor Edward. You are not this body of 3½ cubits. You are verily the Ātman.' Once, I heard the Swami explaining the *Ashtavakra Gita* to the Brahmacharis of the Math. It was the following verse that he expounded :

यदि देहं पृथक् कृत्य चित्ति विश्रम्य तिष्ठसि  
अद्युनैव सुखी शान्तो बन्धमुक्तो भविष्यसि ।

Though a Prince of Bhaktas, he imparted the highest Jñāna also. Once, he said that a yogi would see the universe as his body. That seems to have been his own experience. He taught Raja Yoga to some aspirants. As an



ideal Karma Yogi, he worked incessantly for 14 years in Madras. The widespread propagation of Vedanta in the States of Madras, Mysore and Kerala is largely the result of his assiduous labours. Those, who know the history of the movement from the very beginning, will admit the truth of this statement.

Though I was not able to grasp his many-sided greatness and the depth of his spirituality, I saw many instances of his love to the poor and miserable. The divine compassion he felt for two destitute students and the exertions he made to relieve their distress was the beginning of the well-known Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Madras, and its beneficent activities; Sri Ramakrishna Math,

Madras, owes its inception and growth to the Swami's greatness, renunciation and Tapas.

### THE LAST MEETING

As a result of his tremendous physical and mental exertions for a long time without proper food and rest, he fell ill. For treatment the President-maharaj, Swami Brahmananda, pressed him to go to Calcutta. It was a few days before he went to Calcutta that I met him for the last time. I did not know of his imminent departure. Though his body appeared a little weak, he looked calm and unfathomable like an ocean without waves. He spoke about the transitoriness of the world. I prostrated myself before him and took leave of the Swami for the last time.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### IN THIS ISSUE

The article 'Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa' by Swami Tapasyananda, the Head of the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Trivandrum is the text of a talk given by him on the All India Radio, Trivandrum, in the month of February 1966.

The article 'Can One be Scientific and yet Spiritual?' by Swami Budhananda, an ex-Editor of the *Vedanta Kesari* is the second instalment of the series. The first instalment appeared in our June issue.

'Swami Vivekananda's Conception of Communication Media' by Swami Rasajnananda is the substance of a paper read by him at the Seminar on 'Communication Media' held at the Social Educational Organiser's Training Centre of the Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math in Jan. 1965.

The article 'Some Observations on Indian Music' is based on some of the writings of Swami Gnaneshwarananda, the major portion being the Preface to a book entitled *Giti Guccha* (Bouquet of Songs), containing over 400 songs in Bengali, compiled by the Swami

and published in 1926 by the Patna Centre of the Ramakrishna Mission. We are grateful to Sri Biman Bihari Basu, a devotee of that Ashrama and a personal friend of the Swami, for the translation of the Preface, and to Swami Vitasokananda, the present Head of the Ashrama, for making this article available to us. Swami Gnaneshwarananda, the late founder-leader of the Vedanta Society of Chicago was also a musician.

Mr. M. Feroze is a Lecturer in Education, Teachers' College, Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Perianaickenpalayam, Coimbatore.

Sri T. R. Rajagopala Iyer, B.A., B.L., is a retired advocate now staying at Bombay.

Swami Chinmayananda, the author of the article 'Swami Ramakrishnananda', is now about ninety years old. He is a scholar in Sanskrit, English and Malayalam and now lives in a private *ashrama* at Ottapalam, Kerala. These reminiscences of his were made available to us by Sri P. Seshadri, a devotee from Kerala who has been associated with the Ramakrishna Order for a long time.



*THE BORDER DISPUTES*

It is deplorable to note that when the country is passing through many a crisis, like food and defence, we should indulge in petty squabbles which tend towards provincialism and parochialism. The redistribution of the provinces into the linguistic states has already done sufficient harm to the idea of unity in the country. Each state thinks of its good and welfare, if at all, and not the country as a whole. Narrowness persists even in things dealt out to the people of the same state. Knowing this fully well Government should try to remove this baneful influence on the mass minds by healthier and unifying thoughts. Instead of tackling this problem, we find people raising border questions and disturbing whatever peace that prevails.

This linguistic fever if not treated early and remedied promptly, will, we are sure, lead to unhealthy consequences. Let all concerned be categorically informed that the border question cannot be reopened. If people of any part of the state in which they are situated have any grievance, on any account, let them place them before the ministers of the state and if they are not remedied let them be referred to the Centre. And if the Union Government promptly acts on the complaints we do not see why the so-called aggrieved minority should not be satisfied.

Further, people who agitate for the transference of this district or that to another state must make it a point to travel to the other state to find out how people live there. Whether they are in any better condition than themselves? Let them go to the villages and find out. If the state of affairs is none better, why waste time and energy needlessly? We have had paper plans which have done the common man practically no good. We engage ourselves in small bickerings and let the main issue of building the nation, making it self-sufficient in food and other needs, be neglected. The idea of belonging to the country is sadly lacking. We have often heard foreigners, who come to India, say that they do not find an Indian, but a Tamilian, an Andhra, a

Maharashtrian, a Punjabi, a Gujarati and so on. Too much narrowness has crept into us and the feeling of oneness has gone. We have not yet tried to think of the nation as a whole. Only during the conflict with Pakistan did we see something like unity. But has it always to be pressure from outside which is to make us think of ourselves as one? On the other hand, the lesson that we learnt then should have stimulated us to find ways and means by which the internal strength and conditions were bettered and a solid foundation for oneness was laid.

We must know that, in spite of all our inventions and technical aids, our energy is limited and whatever of it is dissipated in useless occupation cannot be gathered again, that time once lost cannot be recovered, however much one may try. Living in an age of speed, of turbo-jets, it ill fits us to be slow and moving at the bullock cart pace. If we have to be a nation, self-sufficiency in food, and providing of clothing and housing for one and all must be achieved. Otherwise though nominally free we will only be dependencies. What is freedom worth if we, an agricultural country, have to depend on imports for our needs even regarding food? Think of our past, think why the British, the French, the Portuguese came to India. Do we remember history properly? If so, we shall know that they came for trade, in search of food and cloth. And now, we import food-grains in millions of tons! And it is the more pitiable because we care not to solve this problem, but indulge in petty internal quarrels. Does it behove a nation? What Swami Vivekananda said of us seventy years ago is still applicable to us. 'Five hundred years of slavery,' he said, 'has made us hate each other, be jealous of one another.' That bequest of slavery viz., jealousy is still with us. God alone knows when people will eschew this vice and try to accommodate one another.

We earnestly hope that the leaders, who are expected to guide people properly, will think



with cool and collected minds and not exploit the fervid enthusiasm and hysteria of the masses to gain some cheap popularity. Let them ask themselves: 'Can I better the condition of the people by a change?' Let them honestly search their hearts and then

conscientiously follow its dictates. Further, let them be aware that a mischief once set rolling will gather like the proverbial snowball and abstain from any action that will upset the smooth internal flow of life. We hope saner counsel will prevail.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**SHRI RAMAKRISHNA SOUVENIR:** Pub.: Institute of Social Education and Recreation, Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Narendrapur, 24, Parganas, West Bengal. Pp. 236.

The Souvenir which opens with a coloured picture of Sri Ramakrishna and is profusely illustrated contains about 125 pages of reading matter and 10 more pages of report of the activities of the Ashrama. In it are the brief life sketches of the two disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, viz., Swami Saradananda and Swami Akhandananda.

There are other articles also of interest of which we may mention here some: "Sankara and Ramanuja" by Swami Adidevananda, "Christianity and Modern World" by Swami Shraddhananda, "Hinduism and Modern Doubt" by Swami Nikhilananda, "The place of God in Indian Philosophy" by Dr Roma Choudhari, "The Message of the Upanishads" by Dr Anima Sen Gupta, "Sri Ramanujacharya" by (Anna) N. Subramaniam etc. The printing has been neatly done. The art plates are excellent.

### BOOKS RECEIVED

**CHANDOGYA AND BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHADS** with introductions and notes. Pp. 124. Price: 75 P.

**CHANDOGYA AND BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHADS:** Extracts of the Jnana portions. Pp. 57. Price: 50 P.

Both by Swami Atmananda. Pub.: Jnana Asram, Parlikad P.O., Wadakkancheri, Trichur District, Kerala.

**EPISODES AND EXPERIENCES:** Krishnand. Published by the author at Shanti Ashram, Bhadrin, (via) Anand, Gujarat. Pp. xiv+179. Free on request.

**GALLANT SONS OF INDIA:** Pp. 28. Price: Rs. 0.60.

**LADAKH:** Pp. 23. Price: Rs. 0.75.

Both published by the Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Delhi-6.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

**SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MYLAPORE, MADRAS-4**

**SRI RAMANUJA JAYANTI**

Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras held a public meeting on 15-5-1966 to celebrate the birth anniversary of Sri Ramanuja, Sri K. Seshadri, retired Professor of Philosophy spoke on the occasion. The meeting started at 6 p.m. Swami Kailasananda welcomed the speaker and the audience.

Sri K. Seshadri speaking about Ramanuja said: 'Tradition regards Ramanuja as the Avatar of Adi Sesha, of Vishvakshena and of the Pancamaha ayudhas of the Lord. These views are presented clearly in the Pasurams of the Alvars as well as in "the Yati Raja Saptati" and other works. Sri Ramanuja's *avatara* was a means for the proclamation of faith in Vedanta as the Supreme Truth and Lord Narayana as the Supreme Being, the Paratattva revealed in the Vedanta. Sri Ramanuja's advent symbolises the triumph of the highest truth by the power of its

own intrinsic worth ably and effectively declared by the best of its votaries.

'Adi Sesha also represents "Kainkarya" at its best and the Pancamaha ayudhas represent the most perfect or ideal combination of the best and most effective instruments.

'Truth requires to be reiterated and re-established from time to time owing to the ravages wrought by the evil tendencies of Time. Historically, too, Sri Ramanuja's birth was in response to the demands of the times.'

The speaker outlined the philosophy of Visistadvaita as propounded by Sri Ramanuja and touched briefly on the important landmarks in the life of Sri Ramanuja.

It is specially noteworthy, said the speaker, that had it not been for Sri Ramanuja we would not have had the perfect and unbroken tradition of systematised worship in Temples, such as we have to this day, in close accord with the scriptures.

Dr P. Nagaraja Rao proposed a vote of thanks.

*The birthday tithipuja of Swami Ramakrishnananda falls on Saturday the 16th July 1966.*



JULY, 1966

VEDANTA KESARI

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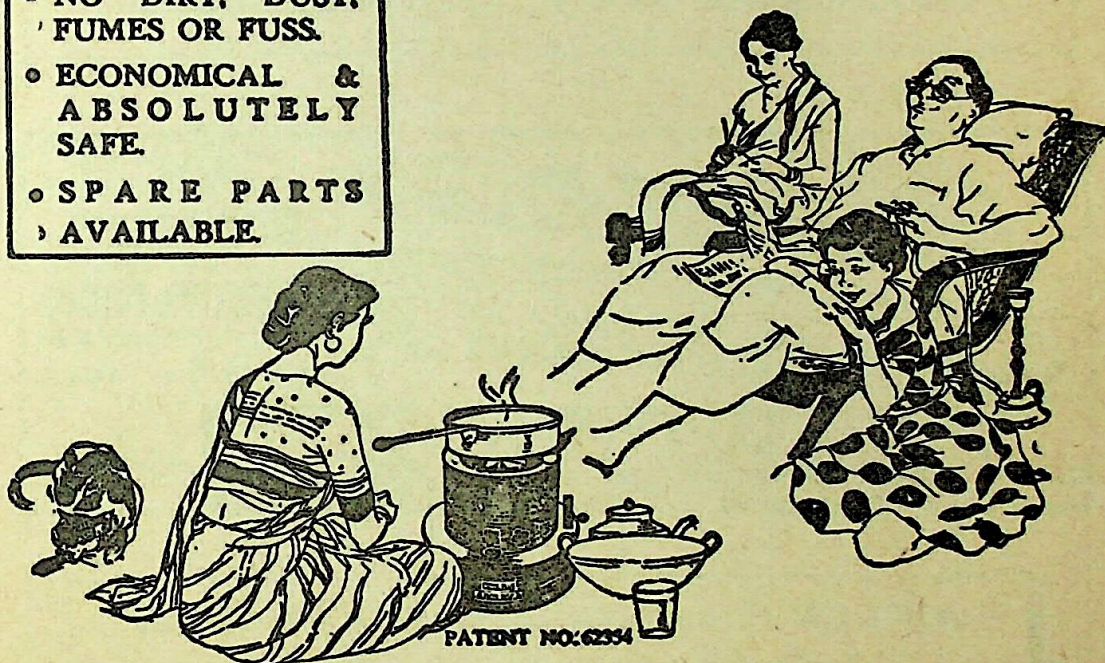
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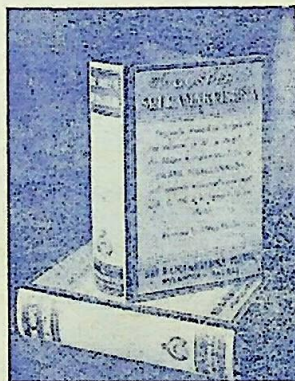
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